Men and Manners of the Third Republic

Albert D. Vandam

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MEN AND MANNERS
OF THE
THIRD REPUBLIC

BY

ALBERT D. VANDAM

AUTHOR OF
'AN ENGLISHMAN IN PARIS'
'UNDERCURRENTS OF THE
SECOND EMPIRE,' ETC.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

About half this book was in type at the time of its author's death : the rest was extant in the shape of papers and contributions to periodicals. These papers have been put together by the publishers as nearly as possible upon the lines which the author himself seems to have intended, and the proofs of the whole volume have been carefully read and edited. In this way it is hoped that the book is now, in the main, representative of its author's original design ; but at the same time it is only just to his memory to admit that the proofs had not received the advantage of his final revision.

CONTENTS

PAGE
I. THE FOURTH OF SEPTEMBER . . . 1
II. THIERS *versus* GAMBETTA . . . 26
III. THE COMEDY AT TOURS . . . 44
IV. GAMBETTA AND THE TOURS RÉGIME . . 62
V. THE RESISTANCE TO PRUSSIA . . . 95
VI. SOME VETERAN REPUBLICANS . . . 121
VII. THE PROVINCIAL TOWNS AND THE FOURTH OF SEPTEMBER 148
VIII. REPUBLICAN AND IMPERIAL METHODS . . 167
IX. JULES SIMON 180
X. A PRETENDER AND HIS FAMILY . . 201
XI. THE SPY-MANIA AND THE REVANCHE IDEA . 219
XII. 'THE KING OF THE JOURNALISTS' . . 245
XIII. POETS AS LEGISLATORS 278
INDEX 303

LIST OF PORTRAITS

Napoleon III. . . . . *Frontispiece*
Adolphe Thiers . . . . *To face page* 32
Adolphe Crémieux . . . ,, 48
Jules Grévy . . . . ,, 128
Jules Simon . . . . ,, 192
Émile de Girardin . . . ,, 256

MEN AND MANNERS OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC

I

THE FOURTH OF SEPTEMBER

'YOUR improvised chiefs of the National Defence are simply so many chevaliers du pavé,' said Bismarck to Jules Favre at their interview at Ferrières, a fortnight after the fall of the Second Empire. Bismarck was not strictly within the truth; the ten men who kicked from their path the lifeless body of the Second Empire, killed three days previously at Sedan, were not 'knights of the pavement,' in the sense of having won their spurs in heading popular riots; seven of them were so-called veterans of the Second Republic, the three others were political *spadassins* of a younger school, and Rochefort, who was added to their number a few days after the 4th September, was a journalistic d'Artagnan with as much physical pluck, though not with as much stamina, as the hero of Dumas' two greatest novels. In these papers I shall treat of them in detail, for with the exception of two, I knew them all, though not to any equal degree, long before they assumed the rôles of 'Saviours of France.'

Unjust though Bismarck's epithet was, it practically reflected the views of the Courts of Europe with regard to the men whom we now complacently term 'the founders of the Third Republic.' Truly, the names of a few had, perhaps, spread over the French borders; for instance, Jules Favre's in connection with the 'Naundorff Trial,' a kind of 'Tichborne Affair' on a minor scale in behalf of the professed descendants of Louis XVII., who, according to them, the professed descendants, had not died in the Temple prison. Rochefort's name was also more or less familiar to the crowned heads and their entourage, who had probably slyly enjoyed his barbed shafts against the latest representative of the Napoleonic dynasty. Upon the whole, though, these men who suddenly claimed to pick up the sword that had dropped from the powerless hands of the Marshals of France, and to stem the tide of foreign invasion, represented neither a political principle, a governmental programme, nor a military possibility, either to those European rulers themselves or to their surroundings, and least of all to the chiefs of the invading army or to their humblest subalterns. Here is what one of the latter wrote to an intimate friend on the 2nd October 1870: 'Mr. So and So is a barrister, and so is Mr. Such and Such. Then there are other barristers, and yet more barristers. What, in the devil's name, do they think that all these barristers can matter to us.'[1] Five of the ten members of the government of the

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[1] At the beginning of this book, I should like to point out to the readers, but especially to the critics, that many of the notes from which I am writing came to me long after the events they described.

National Defence were barristers. The trail of Robespierre and Danton was still over the land.

It is more than doubtful whether the French themselves, outside Paris, knew much of their new and self-elected would-be deliverers. Victor Hugo, though he was in exile for nearly nineteen years, or probably because he was in exile, did not lose sight, we may be sure, of the doings of the republicans; yet the name of Gambetta, in connection with the new government, came as a revelation to him. On the 5th September 1870 he, his son, and his daughter, accompanied by Mme. Drouais and several friends, left Brussels for Paris, where, perhaps not unreasonably from his point of view, the poet expected a triumphal welcome. Their train, which oddly enough carried some of the Orléans princes, perhaps fostering a similar hope, was brought to a standstill at Maubeuge by the side of another containing part of Vinoy's army that had escaped the disaster of Sedan. Men and horses were huddled pell-mell in cattle trucks, the men silent and depressed, brooding over the by them unforeseen and blastlike defeat. Hugo tried to cheer them; he leant out of the carriage and shouted, 'Vive la France! Vive la République,' but there was no response, even when Mme. Drouais told the men who it was that had spoken to them. Just when the train was about to start again, a solitary *franc-tireur* on the platform, unquestionably a Parisian, waved his *képi* and yelled, 'Vive la République! Vive Gambetta!' 'Who's Gambetta? I do not know Gambetta,' asked the poet of M. Antonin Proust, the special correspondent of *Le*

Temps, who had been present at Sedan and who was seated by his side.

M. Proust, who like many French journalists eventually became a politician, explained; and it then transpired that though not absolutely ignorant of Gambetta's name, the poet had certainly not associated in his mind the bearer of it with a probable or even possible prominent position in the event of a republican revival. In fact, Victor Hugo confidently counted on being called upon to play an important part himself, in company with such men as Ledru-Rollin, Edgar Quinet, Louis Blanc, and others of the previous generation. I subsequently learned that Hugo's departure from Brussels was delayed for twenty-four hours in consequence of that expectation, which was probably shared by a large body of republicans on that memorable Saturday afternoon, when like a thunderclap the news spread of Napoleon III.'s surrender to the King of Prussia, and of his being on his way to Germany. Many people, without exactly foreseeing the immediately following events, felt that the Second Empire was dying, if not actually dead. What they, perhaps, did not foresee was the ease with which it would be kicked out of the way. They credited the men who ought to have defended it with greater courage; least of all did they dream of the men who were to constitute the government of the National Defence, that was to come into being within twenty-four hours, as the kickers. Of three-fourths of its members the world at large, and as I said, Paris itself, knew nothing; the other fourth was less obscure to the capital, which would not have withered them with the epithet of 'chevaliers du pavé,' but would most likely have called them 'political adventurers' in spite of their unquestionable talent, talent as distinguished from mere 'gift of the gab,' but not talent as statesmen.

I can speak with confidence on these points, for I arrived in Paris on the evening of the 3rd September, and did not leave it for three days afterwards. For thirty-six hours after my arrival, I was not anywhere near the Palais-Bourbon, the Tuileries, or the Hôtel-de-Ville. I had excellent reasons for remaining in the company of those who knew me, and who could, if necessary, vouch for my identity. I was already then aware that the spy-mania was getting rampant, and did not feel disposed to be torn to pieces or maimed for the sake of satisfying my curiosity, great though it was. With the exception of going to my hotel for four or five hours in order to get some sleep, I did not stir from the Café de la Paix, which was not more than a couple of hundred yards away from the hotel. Truly, I gained all my information at second hand; I doubt whether it would have been as interesting if I had endeavoured to gather it personally.

To return for a moment to Gambetta, whom Victor Hugo did not know, and whom I knew long before events brought him to the top. In those days I had more spare cash and less occupation than was absolutely good for a young fellow of my age, and a considerable part of both my money and my time was wasted in the Boulevard Cafés, and notably at the Café de Madrid, opposite the Théâtre des Variétés, where Gambetta, Ranc, Spuller, Jules Vallès, and others forgathered of an afternoon.

That was before his brief for Delescluze, the editor of *Le Réveil* and the defendant in the blundering 'Baudin Prosecution,' had given Gambetta his first chance; but even after that few people took the blatant, self-assertive, slovenly-dressed, and decidedly Jewish-looking young man *au sérieux*, as an important pawn in France's future political game; and I was certainly not more perspicacious than the majority. And although, during the next three years, Gambetta made rapid strides on the demagogical path, especially after his election to the Chamber in 1869, I continued to look upon him—if ever I gave the matter a thought—as a quantity which, from the Imperialistic point of view—I had no other—might safely be neglected. I fancied I knew what he was playing for—a portfolio in a liberal administration; and with my prejudices strong upon me, I concluded against his chances. He certainly did not represent to me the educated side of the republican opposition. Barrister though he was, and undoubtedly eloquent, he not only lacked the scholarship of nearly all his fellow-deputies of the Opposition, but also the manners of a well-bred man. I have often since laughed when people compared him to Mirabeau. He was as much like Mirabeau as Mr. Healy is like Daniel O'Connell. Great, then, was my surprise when on the 4th September he leapt into sudden prominence or notoriety—the reader has the choice between the two terms. In spite of everything that had happened since 9 P.M. on the previous night, I had not foreseen that, and I question whether any one else had. When at 1 A.M. on the 4th September, Jules Favre rose to move the deposition of Napoleon III., he was practically playing for all he was worth. His daring motion was inspired by something more than political animosity. No one had been more bitterly persecuted by the 'Jacks in office' of the Second Empire, alternately blustering and fawning, although I feel certain that Napoleon III. himself was never cognisant of those facts. Favre's motion, however, whether it was prompted by political connection or by personal resentment, was a most audacious one. Had Morny been in the chair instead of M. Schneider, there would have been there and then an end of Favre's political activity for a long while, for he would have had Favre arrested on the spot—and by that timely measure have galvanised the dead body of the Empire into life. We must bear in mind that, though a prisoner at that hour, Napoleon III. was still nominally the ruler of France; also, that within six or seven minutes' walk from the Palais-Bourbon, viz. at the Tuileries, there was still a regent in the shape of the Empress. The illegality of such an arrest would not have caused Morny a moment's uneasiness; if he had at all condescended to justify his action, which is extremely improbable, he could have defended his position by pointing to that of Favre himself, who had virtually abdicated his inviolability in breaking his oath of fidelity to the Second Empire. Within a few hours of the arrest, France would have learned the nature of the punishment for the crime of *lèse majesté* with the enemy on French soil—for under the circumstances it was nothing less. This is absolutely true; so true, in fact, as to have led to a curious change in the indictment of the Communists in the following year. They were to be charged, jointly and severally, with having revolted against the *de facto* government in the presence of the enemy on French territory. Thiers was most anxious for the indictment to assume that form. 'What about the men of the 4th September?' asked Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, one of Thiers' staunchest friends. 'What about the men of the 4th September?' he repeated; 'did not they revolt against the *de facto* government with the enemy on French territory?' The indictment was accordingly altered.

Had Morny been alive to take so peremptory and drastic a measure, there is no doubt that it would have struck wholesome terror into the minds of Favre's republican fellow-deputies, the courage of many of whom was histrionic rather than heroic, as these pages will perhaps somewhat plainly show. Gambetta's physical daring was not wholly beyond suspicion; Thiers' was, though in the wrong sense of the term. It is doubtful whether, among the prominent men of France, there ever lived one whose poltroonery has afforded the same amount of comic capital. On that particular occasion, Thiers was fully aware of Jules Favre's intention, but physical coward though he was, he did not credit M. Schneider with a similar lack of moral pluck. Thiers discreetly kept away, in case there should be a disturbance. I am positive of this, for I have the honour to know, though not very intimately, the man who occupied his vacant seat during that memorable night-sitting, *i.e.* M. Louis Charles Estancelin, one of the faithful followers of the fortunes of the d'Orléans family. I shall produce directly some of his evidence given to me by word of mouth on the day of the silver wedding of the late Comte de Paris at Sheen House. Thiers was the virtual instigator of the revolution of the 4th September. He wished to be President of the Republic before he died; he had cherished that ambition for more than twenty years, but he lacked the courage to stand forth and 'bell the cat' himself. Victorien Sardou's suggested epitaph, written a few days after Thiers' death, sums up that ambition in a nutshell—

> 'Ci-git un très fin politique,
> Qui, pour régner tout seul, fonda la République.'

M. Schneider, who was not a Morny, allowed Jules Favre to put his motion. Napoleon III.'s half-brother was not a Bayard himself; he would not, like Persigny or Fleury, have risked his life to prop up a fallen cause, but there was no danger of that kind. The officer commanding the troops within the Palais-Bourbon would have obeyed his order; Morny was perhaps the only civilian whom he would have obeyed, in virtue of Morny's relationship to the imprisoned sovereign; but Morny was dead, had been dead these five years, and Schneider reigned in his stead. A capable man unquestionably, this then director of the most important industrial establishment in France, the Creuzot Ironworks; a capable man and an honourable one, and the possessor of an immense fortune, but a bourgeois to the core, and, as such, not fond of desperate expedients, and too much inclined to play the waiting game, which under different circumstances had stood him in good stead. M. Schneider was most jealous of his parliamentary position and the prerogatives it conferred. He had been one of Morny's vice-presidents, and at the latter's death was practically marked out to succeed him; and would have thus succeeded him without a break, but for Achille Fould, the then recent or actual Minister of Finances. Fould proposed to the Emperor, who still had the nomination of the Presidents of the Legislature, M. Alfred Leroux, Schneider's co-vice-president, an equally competent man and a fair authority on financial matters, which knowledge he had imbibed from his father, a well-known Paris banker. 'Very well,' remarked the Emperor, 'we must let M. Leroux preside once or twice, and then we shall be enabled to judge.' M. Schneider, however, got wind of the Emperor's intention, and would never give M. Leroux a chance; and for nearly a twelvemonth the Chamber of Deputies presented the anomaly of having two vice-presidents and no president. Napoleon III., getting tired of the interregnum, appointed Count Walewski; and it was only on his retirement that M. Schneider came into what he considered his own.

I do not know if M. Schneider subsequently attempted to account for, or to justify in any way, the pusillanimity which was the source of his procrastination. Be that as it may, he appears to have infected with his indecision the whole of the Ministry, and notably one man, accustomed to take prompt and energetic decisions, namely, the Minister for War, General Cousin-Montauban, Comte de Palikao, who fought side by side with the English in the China Expedition of 1860. Not even from him did

Favre's motion draw a protest. He sat mute, like the rest of his fellow-ministers. It was not surprise that made them tongue-tied. Favre's motion had been plainly foreshadowed in the morning sitting of the 3rd September. It had been practically arranged between Thiers and Favre some twelve hours previously, *i.e.* about midnight on Friday the 2nd September, when M. Jérome David, an imperialist deputy, informed Thiers of the extent of the disaster at Sedan, the news of which only spread vaguely through the lobbies of the Chamber on the following morning, and was not widely known through the capital until very late in the afternoon.

After the unchecked attempt of Jules Favre during the night sitting, the republicans could and did dare everything. During the three decades that have elapsed since the so-called foundation of the Third Republic, I have heard a dozen different versions of the manner in which the army of Paris was converted to republicanism between 1.30 A.M. and 10.30 A.M. on the 4th September. I have my doubts whether they were thus converted, although it is a well-ascertained fact that the troops quartered in the Napoleon barracks on the Quai d'Orsay began shouting 'Vive la République' from their windows as early as eight o'clock on that Sunday morning. But the ten men who some hours afterwards became the self-proclaimed leaders of the National Defence had no part either jointly or separately in that alleged conversion. In the first place, they had, from their point of view, more important things to look after than the vicarious or personal proselytising of a few regiments. Secondly, among these ten men, there were at least four practised hands at revolution, Eugène Pelletan, Garnier-Pagès, Crémieux, and Glais-Bizoin, all of whom had served an apprenticeship at fomenting riots in 1848, if not before. They knew that if conversion were necessary, it may safely be left to the turbulent element of Paris, of whom every sovereign from Henri IV. to Napoleon III. has stood in more or less fear, Napoleon III., to his cost, being less afraid of it than any of his predecessors. They knew, moreover, that in this instance the rank and file were more demoralised than on any other previous occasion. The republicans, or at any rate their chiefs, had heard—probably before any one else—how as early as the middle of August the officers at the camp of Châlons had virtually relaxed all discipline over their men, and had almost been afraid to show themselves to them. They had heard how the Emperor, in the midst of his soldiers, had been lampooned and insulted with impunity. They had heard of this, although the general public knew it not; but they, the republicans, had trusty intelligence from all parts of the army. A few energetic and determined officers would have put an end to all this; but there were no energetic or determined officers in that respect, either at the front or in the capital. They were all brave, heroic, and ready to sacrifice their lives, but they knew that an attempt to enforce salutary and ordinary discipline would only bring on a catastrophe. Had there been a few of such energetic and determined officers, ready to act on the instructions of a minister—by preference the Minister for War—the revolution of the 4th September might have been nipped in the bud. This would have involved the shedding of some blood. Compared to the blood shed afterwards by the fancy tactics of Gambetta and his coadjutors, it would have been as the Serpentine to the Atlantic.

The bloodshed would probably have been all on one side, and that may be was the cause of the officers' hesitation. For every man in the mob that invaded the Palais-Bourbon was unarmed. Some of them we saw pass by while we were sitting at the Café de la Paix. They were, if I remember rightly, the deputation from the Paris National Guard, between a thousand and fifteen hundred men in all, but without their fire- or side-arms. They knew that the French officer, to his credit be it said, is always reluctant to attack defenceless people, and that knowledge imparted to their ordinary martial bearing a kind of additional dignity which Crével, civic warrior of Balzac's *Cousine Bette*, might well have envied, although he generally appeared in 'full fig' and with his sword girded round his waist.

Had such a crowd been fired upon—as it was in 1848, by an alleged mistake—France from one end to another would have rung with the cry of, 'Such bullets would have been better expended on the invading enemy.' It was the presentiment of such a cry which, in addition to the officers' reluctance to fire upon defenceless people, paralysed their action at the critical moment, and caused the word of command to stick in their throats. It should also be borne in mind that, thrice within this century in France, the insurgents of one day became the government of the next. Every officer is not a Gallifet, who cheerfully answers to the epithet of 'assassin' flung at him in the Chamber by erewhile Communards who have become Legislators; or to put it in my own way, by erewhile incendiaries who have taken to the more profitable trade of quasi-salvage men.

One thing is certain. When the mob, in spite of the cavalry and police, succeeded in crossing the Pont de la Concorde, and had reached the end nearest to the Palais-Bourbon, the troops emerged twice from the Rue de Bourgogne to bar their further progress. Twice they drew up in line of battle at the foot of the bridge, twice their rifles were levelled at the rabble, and twice were those rifles lowered because the command to 'fire' did not come. Twice did the troops return silently whence they came. Who had countermanded the defence of the former residence of the illegitimate daughter of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan against the invasion of the ever-ready riotous element of the capital? My informant, the above-named M. Estancelin, could not say. 'But,' he added, 'I feel certain that a resolute man with a few hundred troops could have made a clean sweep of the rabble even after it had invaded the Chamber itself, and could have arrested Favre, Gambetta, and Co. there and then without the least trouble. I feel certain because I tried and succeeded partly. At the first sound of the drum, the rabble took to their heels by the door opposite the one by which I entered. Unfortunately, Favre and his companions had disappeared before. They were not like the captain and the officers of a ship, deeming it their duty to remain to the end,' he remarked with a smile.

In less than ten minutes, the whole of the Palais-Bourbon was evacuated. Seeing that the inside of the building was safe, M. Estancelin began to think of preserving it from an attack on the outside. Hailing an empty cab, he drove *unmolested* to the headquarters of General Trochu at the Louvre, and met the general just coming out of his private apartments and on his way to the drawing-room where the officers on duty spent their intervals of leisure. Trochu was not even in his uniform. M. Estancelin explained the situation in a few words. 'Too late, my dear sir,' replied Trochu quietly. 'I myself wanted to go to the Chamber, but the crowd was so dense on two of the bridges that I was compelled to turn back.' 'Besides,' he added, when M. Estancelin pointed out to him that he, Estancelin, had come in a cab without any difficulty whatever—'besides, on my way back, I met a good many of your colleagues who told me that it was all over. Too late, my dear sir, too late.'

'Practically, Trochu was right,' concluded M. Estancelin. 'It was too late. When I passed alongside the gardens of the Tuileries once more, I learned that the Empress was gone; and on my return to the Palais-Bourbon, I naturally went into the House itself, thinking that, after the departure of Favre and Gambetta, followed by the mob, the deputies would resume their sitting. With the exception of a few minor officials, there was not a soul in the House itself. I was told that the deputies were assembled in the picture-gallery of the President's private residence. They might as well have been at home for the good they did. Although they were as yet not aware of the Empress's flight, they had already decided to send a deputation to the Hôtel-de-Ville in order to put themselves in communication with the provisional government; which decision was tantamount to a recognition of and adhesion to that government. The latter wanted neither recognition nor adhesion. Supported by the mob, they had assumed the reins of power; if the quasi-recognition and adhesion had been withheld, they, the provisional government, could and would have said, "Then come and dislodge us." It was too late to do that; "too late, my dear sir," as Trochu said to me. To prove to you that the mob-elected, or rather self-elected and mob-confirmed government of the National Defence wanted none of the deputies' recognition or adhesion, I may tell you this. A little while after my return to the Chamber, Thiers also came back, and, notwithstanding Buffet's efforts to the contrary, prevailed upon the deputies to retire altogether, and to leave to the Government of the Republic—one should mark the distinction—the charge and responsibility of the new situation events had created. Translated into pertinent language, the advice came to this: "Your active help we do not require for the moment, inasmuch as it would interfere with our personal ambition and the fat posts we have secured for ourselves; and we do not even consider you sufficiently powerful to lock you up in the case of your opposition, as Louis Napoleon did on the 2nd December 1851."'

Thus far M. Estancelin, whose word I would unhesitatingly take under any circumstances. He exactly gauged the republicans' estimate of their fellow-deputies' potentiality for resistance. Exclusive of M. Estancelin, there were two other deputies who made an attempt to assert their dignity: M. Georges Seigneur, who tried to prevent the wonderful Steenackers, after whom a balloon was subsequently sent, from opening the gates of the Palais-Bourbon to the invading mob; and the old Marquis de Piré, who refused to budge from his seat in the House. The latter had not seen fit to follow the legislators to their respective committee rooms, where they were when the rabble burst into the House, and where they remained, save those who quietly returned home, taking care to inform those whom they met on their way that 'it was all over,' to use the words of General Trochu to M. Estancelin.

The casualties on the 4th September were one black eye, contracted by M. Bigot, a barrister who subsequently died suddenly at Versailles while defending a member of the Commune; one broken rib of a workman, endeavouring to knock down an imperial eagle from the front of a shop; and a few slaps dealt by an equal number of young barristers who were already rehearsing the parts of their somewhat elder fellow-barristers — Jules Ferry, Léon Gambetta, and the rest—in the Salle des Pas-Perdus. Their names have not come down to us; no doubt, some of these have already been prime ministers, or are on their road to office, for the latest elected Chamber, in no way different from its predecessors, contains over one hundred barristers out of a total of less than six hundred members. This little episode finds a place here, because the republicans are never tired of insisting upon the resemblance of their exploit to that accomplished by General Bonaparte on the 18th and 19th Brumaire, and to that of his nephew early on the morning of the 2nd December 1851. The republicans forget that they absolutely overthrew nothing; that in saying 'they kicked the lifeless body of the Second Empire out of the way,' one credits them with too much; they simply stepped over it. The only one who displayed any courage at all was, as I have stated, Jules Favre, and he had tested his ground before venturing on it. 'Where is the Emperor? Does he communicate with his ministers? Does he convey his orders to them?' Favre exclaimed twelve hours before he risked his motion for the deposition of Napoleon III. and his dynasty. To all of these questions there was only a monosyllabic 'no' from Count de Palikao. 'In that case,' Jules Favre went on, this time addressing the Chamber at large, 'there is no need for me to enter into long developments to make the Chamber understand that the *de facto* government has ceased to exist, and that unless there be wilful blindness and obstinacy which would cease to be patriotic, the Chamber can only appeal to itself and to the nation for the means of the defence of both.'

Favre had prepared the ground, Gambetta stormed the position on the 4th September by addressing the rabble in the House, while its members were deliberating in the Salle des Conférences, which is practically the drawing-room of the Chamber of Deputies—or to be still more accurate, the reading- and writing-room, the library being separate. It is just because I do not claim to be an historian, that I wish to be as exact as possible. Some of the ministers were there; but the Minister for War was not. According to one authority, he had gone to the Tuileries to submit a proposal to the Empress; according to another, he was sitting at home, overwhelmed with grief at the supposed death of his son, reported to have been killed at Sedan—'pleurant son fils qu'il croyait mort à Sédan,' as the latter had it. I believe the second version is the correct one, inasmuch as it was subsequently confirmed by Count Palikao himself. Just before I began this book, I heard the story of another good and brave soldier receiving the news of the real death of his son under exceptionally trying circumstances. There was no loophole for doubt in that case; nevertheless, he did not stop to mourn his loss. He went to South Africa to defend his queen and his country. It is not my duty either to censure or to praise the affairs of men, but simply to understand them, to use the words of Baruch Spinoza; and above all to make the reader understand. It was merely a question of temperament between two men of different nations; although an Irishman is said to be as sensitive as a Frenchman. The Irishman's name is Frederick Roberts. M. Pietri, the Prefect of Police, having been sent for to the Tuileries, had neglected to give orders to his men, a few squads of whom would have sufficed to strangle the Revolution of the 4th September in its birth. What, after that, becomes of the resemblance to Brumaire and to the Coup d'État. Speaking of the Cataclysm of 1789-94, Rivarol remarked: 'I have no hesitation in saying that in this much-vaunted Revolution, princes of the blood, military, deputies, philosophers, and people, in short everybody concerned, has been below par, even the assassins.' Suppress the word 'assassins' and the sentence fits the events of the 4th September like a glove. Napoleon III., though suffering excruciating agony from the disease that was to kill him some two years and a half later, had he been allowed to return to Paris in time, instead of being deliberately kept away from it, would have confronted the rabble—with the two barristers at their head—like a king; for he was that, every inch of him, as Lord Normanby, who did not like him, was obliged to confess. He would not have slunk away like Louis XVIII. in 1815, Charles X. in 1830, and Louis Philippe in 1848. He did not mind bloodshed; he knew that revolutions are neither made nor quelled with rosewater.

As it was, the so-called saviours of the country simply enacted a revival of the comedy of 1848, with the same stage, the same scenery, the same supers, and the same accessories. In the evening the veteran actors of the Second Republic—*minus* the great poet-actor, Lamartine, who then led them, and *plus* the new mummers that had joined them in the shape of Gambetta, Ferry, and Picard—repeated the old play and set about casting the new piece with the grandiose title of 'the Government of the National Defence'; in other words, they drew up a list of ministers, which list, after having circulated for about a quarter of an hour in the corridors and on the staircases of the Hôtel-de-Ville, was returned with more or less approval. That formality was supposed to represent 'popular acclamation.' The voice of the people may be the voice of God, as some pretend. They generally forget to add that the tune thus sung is invariably composed by the devil's emissaries. Larousse will tell you that the people rushed to liberate Henri Rochefort who, at the time, was undergoing a term of imprisonment. That is an absolute falsehood. Jules Favre suggested to have him fetched. 'We had better have him with us than against us,' he said. The Greeks starting for the conquest of Troy had Thersites; the men of the 4th September, starting to retrieve the defeat of the Second Empire, had Rochefort, who was supposed to have contributed to the killing of it. I say 'supposed,' for the Empire undermined itself in various ways, but notably by admitting quack-physicians, in the shape of republicans, to prescribe for it. Bismarck, who had diagnosed its diseases, killed it. Thersites proved a thorn in the side of Agamemnon and the other Greek leaders; Rochefort proved a thorn in the sides of Favre, Gambetta, Ferry, and the rest. Quite recently, the Municipal Council of Paris announced their intention of having street-plates, setting forth the history of the nomenclature of every thoroughfare in the capital. I am anxious to read the plate to be affixed to the artery which runs from the Place de l'Opéra to the Place de la Bourse, and is called the Rue du Quatre Septembre.

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What became of the deputies, gently or contemptuously dismissed—the reader may again take his choice—by Thiers? The latter had invited them to go home and worry no longer, and they took the advice. One day in 1884, I was talking about this with M. de Maupas, who helped Louis Napoleon with his Coup d'État, and whose book on the subject I translated. 'Honestly,' he remarked, 'I prefer the deputies of '51, most of whom, at any rate, showed fight. I can understand a parliament being intimidated by a Cromwell, a Napoleon I., and even a Louis Napoleon with an army at his back; I fail to understand a parliament slinking away at the bidding of Adolphe Thiers.' M. de Maupas put the case into a nutshell from my own point of view, hence comment is superfluous.

Favre had told the deputies that they could only appeal to themselves and to the nation for the means of their defence and that of the country; let us look what an appeal to the nation meant from Favre's and Gambetta's points of view.

Nineteen days after Louis Napoleon dissolved the parliament of the Second Republic by force, he asked the nation to approve or to disapprove of his conduct by means of a plebiscite. Louis Napoleon, as the heir to and exponent of the Napoleonic doctrine, has never recognised the right of the people to choose their own form of government. Even before he took the first steps on the road that led to the restoration of the imperial dynasty, he distinctly discountenanced any appeal to the nation *a priori*. 'The people,' he said, 'has not the right of election, but only that of approval.'[1]

Of course, I do not lose sight of the fact that in 1851 France was at peace with the whole of Europe, and that her soil was free from the presence of a foreign enemy. Nevertheless, if the Government of the National Defence had seriously intended to ask the country for a confirmation of its self-bestowed powers, and a decision with regard to the continuance or the cessation of the war, there would have been ample time between the 4th and the 17th September, at which latter date the investment of Paris may be said to have been completed. However desperate and awkward the situation may have been during that fortnight, it was assuredly not as desperate and awkward at the beginning of that period as at the end; yet the decree summoning the electors only appeared on the 16th September, when Crémieux had already reached Tours, when Admiral Fourichon started for the same destination, and Glais-Bizoin contemplated starting. These were the delegates of the government with whom we shall meet again in a little while. The principal members, to use their own grandiloquent language, 'considered themselves bound to remain at the post of the greatest danger.' That decree, however, was a mean and pitiful sham, a shift which no autocrat standing at bay, and panting for another brief spell of authority, would have condescended to employ. The decree was intended to impose not only on the nation at large, but on some of the authors of it, such as Crémieux, Jules Simon, and Glais-Bizoin. They, to their credit be it said, were anxious that the country should be consulted on both questions at issue; namely, on that of the validity of their powers, and on the still more urgent one of war or peace, although Favre had virtually settled the latter by his circular of the 6th September. With rhetorical plumes borrowed of the Knights Templars of old, he grandiosely declared that France 'would surrender not an inch of her territory nor a stone of her fortresses.' Was it in order not to be outdone by Rochefort, who had already invented, or fancied he had invented, the 'Government of the National Defence,' a term by right belonging to Michelet, who was the first to apply it to the faction of the d'Armagnacs which played an important part in the civil wars during the reign of Charles VI.? I cannot say, but Gambetta followed suit with his 'pact either with victory or with death.' In this instance the sentence was borrowed from two originals, both uttered in the selfsame hour by two members of the Convention, Basire and Sébastien Mercier, the immortal author of *Le Tableau de Paris*.

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[1] 'If the people were not restricted to the mere right of sanction, but could indiscriminately choose its rulers and its laws from among so many individuals and codes, there would be a constant recurrence of trouble; for the right of choice means the possession of the right of initiative. And the right of initiative can only be left to power capable of deliberating; and numerous masses cannot deliberate.'—*Œuvres Complètes*, de Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, vol. i. p. 44.

Be all this as it may, Favre must have known that his sentence, however grand it might sound to the rabble that had escorted him on the previous day from the Palais-Bourbon to the Hôtel-de-Ville, would have the effect of closing the door against all attempts at negotiations with

Bismarck. When discussing the extent of the information possessed by the improvised rulers of France on the subject of the Germans, their army and its chiefs, including the future Iron Chancellor, we should not take too much for granted. We may, however, be sure of one thing; the preliminaries to the capitulation of Sedan had been brought to their knowledge by that time. I am alluding to the particulars of the interview which took place late in the evening of the 1st September in the house of Dr. Jeanjot at Donchery, between Moltke, Bismarck, and Blümenthal on the one side, and Wimpffen, Castlenau, and Favre on the other. And had not Bismarck expressly stated in that interview that, to ensure the future safety of Germany's sons, there should be a glacis between them and France, 'a territory and fortresses which shall render us secure for evermore from all attack on her (France's) part.'

II

THIERS *VERSUS* GAMBETTA

Gambetta's interests, in 1870, demanded a continuance of war. Peace immediately after the fall of Sedan might have brought back Napoleon iii., considering that, at a much later period, Bismarck threatened to restore him, and the threat was not a mere jest on his part. Peace without the return of Napoleon iii. meant either the restoration of the d'Orléans dynasty or a republic, and in either case the preponderant influence of Thiers, at any rate for some time to come. The first *dénouement* Favre and Gambetta thought they could avert, and to a certain extent did avert. The train that took Victor Hugo and his party across the Belgian frontier, and on their way to Paris, also conveyed two sons and one grandson of Louis Philippe to the same destination. The Ducs d'Aumale and de Chartres and the Prince de Joinville went to offer their swords to the Government of the National Defence, which saw fit to decline the offer on the pretext of the public peace. Victor Hugo on the evening previous to his departure from Brussels, *i.e.* on the 4th September, pretended to be imbued with a similar apprehension when he was informed of the presence of the d'Orléans princes at the Hôtel de Flandres in the

Belgian capital. He suspected the motives of the descendants of Louis Philippe as much as any republican, and was not over courteous in expressing his distrust even to their faces. Some years before, he happened to be on board an English steamer plying between Jersey and Ostend with the Duc d'Aumale. Within sight of the coast of France, the duke came up to him and said, 'When shall I be able to set my foot on that soil?' 'I do not mind how soon, Prince,' was the answer, 'provided you keep your hands off it.' Favre was neither so outspoken nor so epigrammatic, but he pretended that the presence of the d'Orléans princes in the ranks of the army would lead to political complications that might prove hurtful to the interests of France. I hold no brief for any one, and least of all for the descendants of Louis Philippe, whether living or dead. I am, moreover, inclined to think that if their readiness to shed some of their wealth had been equal to their readiness to shed their blood for France, the late Comte de Paris would have died on the throne of his grandfather, and the present Duc d'Orléans might have reigned after him. To judge by some of the recent utterances and doings of the latter, such a reign would, perhaps, not have been an unmixed blessing to England, but I am not concerned with that question at the present moment. I sincerely believe that in September 1870 the princes of the House of Orléans were solely prompted by patriotic motives. I should continue to think so, even if I were not aware of the subsequent and successive attempts of the Prince de Joinville (under the name of Colonel Lutherod) and of the Duc de Chartres (under the name of Robert Le Fort) to serve their country in the struggle of 1870-71. Their propagandist strategy in favour respectively of their nephew and brother may not have been absolutely absent from their minds, but it was distinctly in abeyance. That patriots of the Favre and Gambetta type were unable to appreciate, or even understand, patriots of the d'Orléans type is not altogether surprising, seeing that even before Sedan the republicans were hoping for more defeats, lest a victory should restrengthen the tottering dynasty.

All things considered, then, Favre and Gambetta felt themselves capable of coping with the possible onslaught of the d'Orléans in order to the restoration of their dynasty. This is not complimentary to the members of the younger branch of the Bourbons, but I could show that the republicans were never frightened of any one but the Bonapartes, who had strangled two of their republics, and would long ago have strangled the Third but for the untimely and tragic death of the Prince Imperial.

The second and more probable, also more logical, *dénouement* to a peace treaty immediately after Sedan, without the return of Napoleon III., was a republic with Thiers at its head. Favre and Gambetta felt that they could only delay it, not avert it. And both, but especially the latter, knew that the advent of Thiers, either as the Prime Minister of a restored d'Orléans monarchy or as the President of the Third Republic, would mean, in the first case, their absolute retirement, in the second, their comparative effacement. Gambetta called Thiers ‘le sinistre vieillard'; Thiers stigmatised him as 'le fou furieux.' If Favre and Thiers did not exchange similar amenities, the cause lay probably in Favre's better breeding, which made him shrink from apostrophising the man who, after all, at that moment was the foremost political figure in France. His discretion saved a Billingsgate retort, for Thiers was originally as ill-bred as Gambetta, but many years of association with refined people had modified, though not entirely obliterated, his lack of *savoir-faire.* We shall have a mild instance of this deficiency directly, in Thiers' interview with Lord Granville. A sense of decorum, similar to Favre's, curbed Jules Grévy's tongue with regard to Gambetta; nevertheless, he told him to his face: 'Vous n'êtes qu'un charlatan, qui finirez dans la peau d'un factieux (You are simply a quack, who as a last resource will don the skin of a sedition-monger).' How prophetic the sentence was will be seen immediately. Equally prophetic were the feelings of Favre and Gambetta with regard to Thiers' intention of dispensing with their co-operation at the earliest opportunity. Favre held a portfolio for less than five months in Thiers' first cabinet; Gambetta was not even asked to join that cabinet.

The only chance that could remove Thiers from their path and leave them free to consolidate their self-assumed powers was Thiers' death. In the Middle Ages, and even later on, Thiers' life, under similar circumstances, would not have been worth a month's purchase. The bravo or the poisoner would have made short work of an old man over seventy. Such a solution of their difficulties never suggested itself for an instant either to Favre or Gambetta. A temporary removal might, however, give them breathing-space, and Thiers' mission to the Courts of Europe was invented. No one knew better than they that such a mission would be absolutely barren of results, as far as the intervention of a European power was concerned. If they had any doubts about it at the outset, the failure of the first attempt in that direction must have dispelled them. Lord Granville simply declared 'that he could take no steps in support of a Government which had not received the sanction of the nation,' and communicated his answer to Lord Lyons. The rest of the conversation between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the delegate of the Government of the National Defence is of secondary importance; although Lord Granville reminded Thiers that, apart from the absence of a legally constituted government, the grandiloquent sentence of Favre forbade all idea of opening negotiations, and that although Thiers was invested with all kind of powers, he had not the power to make a treaty of peace. But Thiers had ceased to listen, for after having spoken a considerable time, Lord Granville discovered that his visitor was comfortably asleep in his armchair. He, the visitor, had his say; that was always sufficient for him; and even under the exceptionally weighty circumstances the elementary politeness of listening to the reply had yielded to the fatigue consequent upon his voyage across the Channel. When Bismarck heard of this, he wittingly or unwittingly repeated the malicious dictum of Samson, of the Comédie-Française, 'Sleep is also an opinion.'

'Such a thing could not have happened to an interlocutor of mine, for when I sleep, I sleep aloud; in other words, I snore,' he added. [Thiers resumed his mission after one day's stay at Tours, where, to use his own words, the delegation of the Government of the National Defence sent from Paris 'was utterly astounded at the chaos amidst which it found itself; which chaos it had not the strength to unravel (Tout ébahie du chaos où elle se trouvait, chaos qu'elle n'avait guère la force de débrouiller).']

Lord Granville's answer to Thiers was practically repeated to him everywhere. Seemingly it was accompanied by more or less genuine expressions of sympathy with France; but the comments on the want of wisdom of France under defeat do not appear to have been altogether flattering. 'What a strange nation you are!' said Alexander II.; 'you gird against the idea of accepting a defeat. Look at Russia. She submitted to her reverses at Sebastopol, and she is none the worse for them to-day.'

Francis-Joseph might have had the 'prompt copy' of the scene, for his words were practically a repetition of Alexander's. 'How can I intervene at this moment?' he remarked. 'France has just overthrown her government. If Austria had overthrown me after Solferino or after Sadowa, do you think she would be in the position in which she is at present?' I am virtually writing from memory, and am now and again at a loss, not to remember rightly, but to trace my recollections to their original sources and informants. I am, therefore, not certain whether those remarks were conveyed at the time of their utterance by Thiers in his quasi-official despatches to the delegation at Tours, or subsequently related by him by word of mouth; but I am certain that the remarks were made. For reasons which I shall point out directly, I am inclined to think that they *were not* in the despatches, which will appeal to those who care to read them as masterpieces of mendacity. They are as superior in that respect to the kind of document which has been branded with the epithet of *suppressio veri, suggestio falsi*, as the essay of a prizeman at Oxford or Cambridge is superior to the essay of a board-school boy. There is throughout a suggestion of the truth, and at the same time a, to me, deliberate suppression of the logical consequences of that truth as they presented themselves to at least two of his imperial interlocutors. In this instance, I have before me an extract from his despatch to the delegation from St. Petersburg dated 1st October. 'I have been at St. Petersburg for the last five days,' it runs, 'and I have seen both the Emperor and Prince Gortschakoff. I have had long interviews with these masters of the Empire. Here, as everywhere else, I have been confronted with prejudices, less against the form than against the instability of the republican government. The moderate men who are in power are appreciated here, but there is the ever-present dread of the near advent of the men of disorder. I have replied to that fear by the well-known strength of the moderate party, and by the necessity of still further strengthening it by giving it support. Nevertheless, when we began to discuss the future relations of

A Thiers

the two empires, that fear again cropped up. It is needless to insist upon my efforts to dispel it.'

Alexander II. then plainly foresaw the Commune, which neither Thiers nor any one else could have quelled but for the timely presence of MacMahon at Versailles. At no period of Thiers' life would the army have stirred at his bidding, and least of all such an army chief as the man who traced his descent from Patrick MacMahon of Torrodile, so honourably identified with the cause of the last Stuarts, and who even looked upon the two Napoleons in the light of usurpers. It is not libelling that honest soldier's memory to say that, having been absolved from his grudging fealty to the Second Empire, he would nevertheless not have lent himself to the tentative establishment of a republic, if he had been more of a statesman and politician than he was. In such a case Thiers could not have 'bamboozled him' into the belief that this republic was only a cleverly concocted prologue to a monarchical restoration. Those who would cite the action of Cavaignac in 1848 against my statement would find, on careful investigation, that Cavaignac was acting for himself, inasmuch as he firmly believed in his future Presidency of the Second Republic.

To return for a moment to Thiers' mission. Victor Emmanuel promised armed support, but on two conditions: (1) the legal constitution of a government which up to then had not the faintest semblance of legality; in other words, the fulfilment of his promise depended on the elections, the immediate necessity for which he, like the other European rulers, endeavoured to impress upon Thiers' mind; (2) an entire abstention on the part of France from interference either remote or near with the accomplished fact of Italy's occupation of Rome. Whether the Italian parliament would finally have endorsed the King's promises of military assistance is a question that does not concern us here. 'I was confronted with the same objections everywhere,' concluded Thiers, whenever he told the story of his mission; 'and when I came back to Tours I was confronted by Gambetta, who stormed and raved at the very sound of the word "elections." The only thing I could do under the circumstances was to retire; "that's what I did."'

We shall see later on that Thiers did nothing of the kind, that he was virtually like the Englishman in Sue's *Juif Errant* who followed the lion-tamer from place to place, and occupied a box at every performance, in the hope of seeing the tamer devoured by his animals and of being in at the death. That was what Thiers did with Gambetta, and Gambetta, though he had foreseen all this, did not like it. As I have said, it was to avoid that surveillance at first that Favre and Gambetta invented the mission to the European Courts, the result, or rather lack of result, of which was a foregone conclusion in the minds of all three. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether these two would have conferred and the third accepted that mission, but for reasons which neither of them could avow to the other. Otherwise it is doubtful whether either Favre or Gambetta, even for the sake of ridding themselves of Thiers temporarily, would have pitchforked him into a position, which gave him such prominence, not only in France herself, but also in the rest of Europe, at the very moment when it was their personal policy to drag him to the back and leave him there. I sincerely believe that both Favre and Gambetta reckoned on 'a chapter of accidents'—in the strictly literal sense of the word—to make the temporary absence permanent. Thiers had exceeded the span of life allotted to man, and although remarkably hale and hearty and free from ailments for a man of his years, a chill, while speeding across Europe during that hard winter, might be fraught with serious consequences. I need not enlarge on this, seeing that I and those who share my belief have no actual proofs of what we advance. Neither have the biographers of Bonaparte who accuse him of having placed his rival generals in the thickest of the battle, in order to get rid of them; yet those biographers are not altogether unworthy of credit. I fail to see, then, why two lawyers, who did more harm than good to France, should enjoy a greater immunity from suspicion than the son of another lawyer who (the son) did more good than harm.

And Thiers himself? What induced him to accept a task which he knew to be a forlorn hope? Thiers accepted it *for the purpose of personally working the 'puff preliminary' to his forthcoming début as President of the French Republic, and of working that puff as inexpensively as possible.* I have not italicised the previous sentence for the sake of producing a cheap effect. Nor has the sentence, as a whole, been prompted by mere suspicion, as in the case of my accusation against Favre and Gambetta. But for considerations of space, I could give chapter and verse for everything I state; as it is, I must necessarily be brief. Never during the course of his political career had Thiers been so near the realisation of the dream of his life—the Presidency of the French Republic—as he was then. Never within the forty odd years of that career had the political stage of France afforded greater facilities for making such a first appearance, unhindered by the possible cabals of the partisans of rival actors. Above all, both the 'puff preliminary' and the appearance itself could be organised without disbursing a brass farthing, no mean consideration to a man like Thiers, and to two women like Mme. Thiers and Mlle. Dosne, all three of whom would have split a brass farthing in two.

I do not profess to be an historian, I am only a *causeur*, nothing more. If I were an historian, I should have simply developed the first two of my statements, and left the third unmentioned. Being what I am, I prefer to show to what extent Thiers' parsimony affected 'the beginnings of the Third Republic,' and his own ambition of becoming its President.

In 1830, when the Second Republic was within an ace of being established on the ruins of the Bourbon dynasty, Thiers was too young, and, above all, too little known as a practical politician, to aspire to the dignity of the chief magistracy. Except in a very limited circle, no prestige attached to his name, and rather than see a republic without himself at the head of it, he balked the republicans of their desire, and invented the monarchy of Louis Philippe. 'This is my most promising successor, probably the only one,' said Talleyrand, a few months later; 'he will put up the future thrones for auction, but, unlike myself, he will want to buy one in on his own account, provided,' he added, 'it goes cheaply, for he is not likely to be lavish with his money.'

In 1848, Thiers could not have bought-in the throne of Louis Philippe for himself, if he would have done so, for, by that time, he had too much prestige—of the wrong kind. The Moderate Constitutional Monarchists would have rallied to a Conservative republic under any one but Thiers; they remembered too well the part he had played during the whole of the Citizen Monarchy; they knew that the King himself had revolted more than once against Thiers' would-be dictatorship, that on one occasion he exclaimed: 'Very well, Monsieur le Ministre; seeing that there is to be a duel between us, I 'll accept your challenge, but remember this, though you may pass your sword through my body, you will probably perish from the very wound you will inflict on me.' The republicans, on the other hand, mistrusted Thiers throughout. When he offered them the alliance of the royalists to overthrow Louis Napoleon, they declined. 'Remember,' said Thiers, 'that you are rushing towards your own destruction.'—'We prefer that to being saved by you and saving you in return.'

Thiers would not have bought-in Louis Philippe's throne if he could have done so, because it would have proved too expensive. Thiers allowed his mother 200 francs per month when he was out of office; 250 francs when he was in. The deduction of the extra allowance was made from the day of the fall of his ministry, the increase was reckoned from the day of his nomination being gazetted in the *Moniteur*, by which device he managed to save from nine to ten francs, inasmuch as it generally took him five or six days to get his cabinet together. A man who could reckon so closely was not likely to contest a plebiscitary presidential election with a Louis Napoleon or a Cavaignac. The one, though practically penniless, did not mind what he spent on credit; he trusted to the prestige of his name for the success which would enable him to settle his liabilities. The other was equally lavish with ready money—only it happened to be the money of the State—the so-called secret funds—placed at his disposal by his erstwhile comrade-in-arms Lamoricière, the Minister for War, and Dufaure, the Minister of the Interior of his own government, for the most formidable rival of Hortense's son was at that time the head of the Executive. A startling exception to the proverbial rule that possession is nine points of the law; though in political France that rule is as often honoured in the breach as in the realisation. Cavaignac, in spite of the ample means at his command, and the enormous pressure brought to bear by his ministers on the prefects and the army, polled four million votes less than his principal rival. That men vastly inferior to him as statesmen should obtain each several thousand suffrages at a comparatively unimportant outlay, or at no outlay at all,[1] while he, Thiers, was absolutely left out in the cold, must, moreover, have convinced Thiers of two things: (1) that the nation, in her actual temper, if consulted directly on the choice of a president, would have him at no price; (2) that if any reaction in his favour should occur during the next four years, the practical utilisation of such a reaction would involve an expenditure thoroughly repugnant to his inveterate parsimony. For not for one moment could Thiers, in spite of his overweening conceit, have flattered himself that in the near future he would attain the popularity of the Prince de Joinville, who, unsolicited as it were, and without loosening his purse-strings, had collected over twenty-three thousand votes.[1]

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[1] Ledru-Rollin, 371,431; Raspail, 36,994; Lamartine, 17,914; Changarnier, 4687. They spent very little. Joinville, whose candidature was barred by the new constitution, spent nothing, yet he polled 23,219 votes.

Yet, there was one hope left, though a faint one, for it meant parting with a little money. Article 47 of the new constitution provided that, in the event of no candidate obtaining the absolute majority, and, at least, two million of votes at the first plebiscitary poll, the election of a president would lapse to the National Assembly, which was to choose secretly from among the five candidates having polled the greatest number of votes. I have shown elsewhere[2] that this hope sustained Thiers for some time. When it failed, he attempted to conspire for the overthrow of Louis Napoleon and the restoration of the monarchy. The Coup d'État nipped the affair in the bud.

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[1] There was no doubt about the popularity of the third son of Louis Philippe. During the sacking of the Tuileries in February 1848, his portraits and busts were left untouched, while those of his father, and his brother the Duc de Nemours, were mercilessly trampled under foot.

[2] *My Paris Note-Book*, ch. x. p. 301. London: William Heinemann.

Eighteen years later the situation was entirely changed. The suspicion of the republicans had undergone many modifications, although it had not entirely vanished. Ever since his return from exile, Thiers had, to all appearance, fought valiantly by their side against the Empire, in and out of the Chamber. Ledru-Rollin, Victor Hugo, Louis Blanc, and other prominent figures of '48, had been absent for nearly two decades; some were dead, and among those who had actively co-operated to the desired end, not one could compare with Thiers for talent. Moreover, he was absolutely necessary to those who, while professing to be the champions of the proletariat, were secretly afraid of, and openly qualified it as 'la démocratie alcoolisé,' 'ilotes ivres,'[1] 'ces idiots, ces brutes, ces crapules, mes amis politiques.'[2] He was the only one who could arrest the taunt of 'anarchists,' which was already on the lips of Europe at large; hence he became the arbiter of the situation from 12 A.M. on the 3rd September 1870.

He was shrewd enough not to accept a quasi-official position. That, in the eyes of the sovereigns of Europe, would have made him the accomplice, hence the equal, of 'the knights of the pavement, the improvised chiefs of the National Defence.' He posed throughout as the disinterested counsellor who—to use the language of the *Journal Officiel*—'did not wish to refuse his services to the Government under the actual circumstances.' He himself indited that note, announcing his departure on his mission. He could afford to play a waiting game, his

[1] Gambetta.

[2] Clément Laurier, the same who negotiated the Morgan loan.

presidency was assured. The trick imposed on none of the members of the Government, least of all on Rochefort and Picard, both of whom protested. Favre and Gambetta did not protest; they, as I have said, included a possible chapter of accidents in their calculations; and Gambetta counted on something else besides. He counted on the pseudo-miracle that, nearly three-quarters of a century before, had made the starving, ill-clad, undisciplined hordes of the First Republic victors over the most formidable troops of Europe. The result of such a miracle would have been the utter effacement of Thiers and the rest, and the absolute dictatorship—one cannot say for how long—of Gambetta. It was Louis XIV.'s 'L'état, c'est moi,' in the future tense.

Thiers' power of seeing into the near future had not impaired his power of remembering the distant past. He felt instinctively that he was not *persona grata* with the sovereigns of Europe. His unintentionally good, as well as his intentionally evil, deeds, between 1830 and 1850, weighed alike against him. There was his share in the infamous persecution of the Duchesse de Berri and his campaign for bringing the remains of Napoleon from St. Helena to Paris. The campaign was simply a device on his part for increasing the sale of his then forthcoming *Consulat et Empire*, but both the book and the campaign had contributed largely to the revival of the Napoleonic legend—a bitter pill to those and the successors of those who had pulled the strings that moved Stürmer, Montchenu, Balmain, and Hudson Lowe—apart from the fact that the revived legend proved to be the 'pro-gospel' of the Second Empire. All this, Thiers knew, could not but have left a strong substratum of antagonism against him in the minds of the rulers of Europe; an antagonism still further increased by his direct and indirect participation in the events of 1848, which shook nearly every one of those rulers on their thrones. The utterances of Prince Metternich and Count Apponyi, between the years 1836 and 1840, with regard to him had proved almost prophetic.

Worse than all, he had never been able to efface, or even to soften, those unfavourable impressions of the sovereigns, by occasional contact, like Talleyrand. Unlike the latter and Guizot, he had never had an ambassadorship conferred on him. During the reign of Louis Philippe, state visits of the crowned heads of Europe were rare. When Queen Victoria visited Eu in 1843 Guizot was in power. When the sovereigns crowded Paris in 1855 and 1867, Thiers was worse than in the cold shade of opposition—he was a determined and avowed enemy of the Empire. What more natural than that he should clutch at the opportunity to ingratiate himself given him by Favre and Gambetta, perhaps suggested by himself, especially when *the opportunity was to cost him nothing*?

For that was a consideration also. It may sound extravagant, but I doubt whether Mme. Thiers and Mlle. Dosne would have let him go at his own expense. The ladies, who haggled with the baker for a diminution of the price of the rolls for the presidential dinners, on the ground that the greater part of the bread was wasted, who never offered their ordinary guests any refreshments, who objected to the more intimate guests eating at luncheon the peaches intended for dinner, though the peaches cost Thiers nothing, these ladies would have probably refused supplies.

As it was, they not only did not oppose the journey, but accompanied him. We have already seen the results, as far as France was concerned; that Thiers' own position was improved by it, there can be no question.

III

THE COMEDY AT TOURS

In the beginning of November 1870 Thiers sat down at Tours deliberately to watch Gambetta. When, in the previous month, Gambetta had reached Tours after a journey partly by balloon and partly by rail, the decree of the Government of the National Defence purporting to summon the electors was nearly two months old. The document was a mean and pitiful sham, a shift intended to impose not only on the nation at large, but on some of the signatories of the document itself. Crémieux, Admiral Fourichon and Glais-Bizoin left Paris under the distinct impression that the provisions of the document would be carried out with the shortest possible delay. Almost immediately after their arrival in the ancient capital of Touraine they bestirred themselves to find a suitable building for the sittings of the coming National Assembly, and in default of something better it was decided that the Circus would have to do, the same circus which, seventeen years later, almost day for day, was to resound with the attempted defence of Daniel Wilson—another product of the Third Republic—accused of complicity in the Caffarel scandal, viz. the trafficking in decorations. The necessary alterations were fast being proceeded with, in spite of contrary orders from Paris by balloon, informing the three Ministers of the postponement of the elections, when, on the 9th October, Gambetta dropped like a bombshell among them.

Gambetta did not expect an enthusiastic welcome from either Crémieux or Glais-Bizoin, and for once in a way he was not disappointed. Neither they nor Admiral Fourichon went to the station to meet him, but they ordered or, perhaps, induced the authorities to go, *i.e.* the prefect, the secretary-general of the prefecture, and the swarm of young republicans who, though these were early days, had already been provided with suitable civil occupations by the Government of the National Defence. These two republicans of '48 were rather puzzled as to the reason of their young colleague joining them. I would assure the reader that I have no deliberate intention of being facetious, although, not being a Frenchman, the Third Republic from its very beginning has always struck me as a huge farce and Titanic mystification, while I have learned to look upon the First Republic as a ghastly tragedy, and upon the Second Republic as merely a kind of comedy. But though I write in sober earnest, I must record a fact which I have on unimpeachable authority. These two veterans, both of whom had exceeded the span of life allotted to man, not only professed themselves able to cope with the situation, but conscientiously imagined themselves to be thus qualified. There are men who, at that age, are superior to their juniors in the science of governing, but such men are not novices or 'prentice statesmen. Crémieux, in spite of his having held the seals in '48, had no more than Glais-Bizoin served such an apprenticeship. They and their fellow-delegate were essentially upright gentlemen, and one, Crémieux, was possessed of more than ordinary talent and proved republican courage. All three practically dropped out of the history of the Third Republic after the prologue, but I am not writing history, and as such, I think them worth sketching.

Glais-Bizoin was seventy-one, and if he had ever possessed the faintest individuality or spirit of initiative, he had lost both by then. His conspicuous state of nonentity—if that be not a bull—had been his chief recommendation to Favre's and Gambetta's notice on the 4th September. They would willingly have composed the whole of the Government of the National Defence with men of Bizoin's stamp, inasmuch as they did not want co-actors, but mere 'supers,' in the play of 'Paris Delivered' which they thought they were going to enact. The plot, however, necessitated the engagement of 'supers' who would look the parts, for unlike the Revolution of '48, this one was likely to have foreign and most critical spectators, sitting in the front stalls at Versailles and communicating their impressions to all the crowned heads of Europe. In '48, Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin, Garnier-Pagès, and the rest wanted nothing from those rulers; they might and did reluctantly admit an Albert Martin (Albert l'Ouvrier) among their number; in 1870 Gambetta and Favre did, at any rate, profess to want something from four of the most aristocratic powers. Glais-Bizoin admirably fulfilled the conditions required of him. He was eminently respectable, had a good appearance, reminding one of the bucks and beaux of the 'forties, the contemporaries of Count d'Orsay, whose counterfeits are often seen in the windows of the printshops in St. James Street. He had lost his voice and scarcely spoke above a whisper; he had neither a will nor any political talent worth mentioning, and did not mind assuming different characters as the play went on. They did not even give him a portfolio, and then and afterwards he was held of so little account that the Commune would have none of him as a hostage. Arrested at the end of March, in Paris, he was almost immediately set free.

Admiral Fourichon has to be judged less peremptorily. He was possibly an able commander at the time when France had as yet not developed the ambition of becoming a first-rate naval power. He was certainly not a man of genius, and it was a man of genius France wanted for his position at that crucial moment. At the outbreak of the war he had been intrusted with the command of the French squadron charged to operate in the German Ocean, and the 4th September found him before Wilhelmshafen without having struck a blow. He and his fleet returned to Cherbourg, like the cat of the adage who went to Rome, mewed at the Pope from a distance, and came back again. A man of initiative would have done differently; he might have done badly, but there are circumstances in which 'it is better to do badly than not to do at all,' as Machiavelli had it. French sailors of the higher grades invariably were and are delightful people to meet, either socially or officially. During the

Second Empire, Admiral Fourichon was not an exception to the rule; but his sudden transplantation among the republicans proved too much for him. The charming, unaffected gentleman, who had a kind remark for the merest casual acquaintances in the various restaurants round about the Ministry of Marine, became an altered being at Tours and at Bordeaux. He was, perhaps, regretting his wasted opportunity for doing some damage to the enemy or, perhaps, under the necessity of keeping everybody at arm's-length, lest he should be overwhelmed with uninvited plans for retrieving on land what he had failed to accomplish at sea; at any rate, he became sententious and unsympathetic, notably to the few English and American journalists who had followed the Delegation to Tours. I was told that much, and did not care to verify those statements personally. On the other hand, a Frenchman who was in a position to judge told me that the Admiral was working day and night to evolve some kind of order out of seemingly hopeless disorder, in which efforts he was consistently hampered rather than seconded by the emissaries of the new demagogy swarming around him whom he had not the moral courage to exclude. He had but to take a glance from the windows of the former mansion of Marshal Baraguey-d'Hilliers, where he had taken up both his official and private quarters, at the streets below to perceive what the new demagogy was accomplishing with regard to the faint breath of military discipline, which in some isolated instances still tried to make itself felt; when mushroom dignitaries, nameless adven-

Ad Crémieux

turers, and even worse nondescripts, insisted that the so-called miracle of 1792 could be repeated with peasants simply armed with pitchforks and scythes, the Minister of Marine and the delegate of the Minister of War in one well-nigh gave way to despair.[1]

In spite of all this, Admiral Fourichon might to a certain extent have succeeded in raising the semblance of an army wherewith to check the further progress of the Germans, if not to drive them from the country, as the new demagogy boasted it would do. Aided by General Le Fort, whom we must not confound with the Duc de Chartres, who adopted that pseudonym, Admiral Fourichon managed to gather a little over a hundred thousand men, whom he placed under the command of the best generals still available. He strenuously endeavoured to imbue them—though vicariously—with a notion of obedience and subordination, both of which essentials to warfare the new demagogy almost declared to be optional. Unfortunately he was opposed at every step by the incarnation of an older demagogy, called Jacobinism, in the shape of Adolphe Crémieux. The character of the latter might puzzle a psychologist of the highest order, and I need not remind the reader that I cannot even claim to be numbered among the learners of that science. I was brought up to look upon republicanism in general and upon French republicanism in particular as the most transparent and most ridiculous of all shams and delusions, yet the men who thus taught me were on terms of intimate friendship with Crémieux, who often visited them. I often had occasion to see and to listen to him, and as I advanced from youth to manhood I became conscious of his vast and varied knowledge, of the personal charm he exercised over every one with whom he came in contact, a charm all the more remarkable perhaps in that it owed nothing to physiognomical advantages, for Crémieux and Littré were terribly deficient in that respect; in fact, so deficient as to have become positive standards of comparison in the matter of ugliness. The Jacobinism that was in Crémieux's blood—his father had been an ardent participator in the Reign of Terror—rarely found vent in his speech, every word of which was stamped with that old-fashioned courtesy and urbanity which reminded one more of the ancient régime than of the dispensation that immediately followed it, and his manners throughout matched his speech. He was perhaps the most eloquent pleader of the French Bar of that and the immediately preceding period, and his eloquence owed nothing to either the classical or purely impassioned method; it was the eloquence of the brilliant *causeur* who is crammed full of interesting fact which he drops carelessly as he proceeds, as being of little or no importance, and then when they are heaped around him, sets them in a blaze, revealing their points by one incandescent rather than flaming epigram, by 'le mot de la fin,' as the French have it. It proved most irresistible with women or, to quote a keen observer, 'with the wearer of any petticoat, from the judge and the priest to the intelligent *grisette*.'

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[1] I am not inventing. This was the proposal of M. Steenackers, an artist who during the latter years of the Second Empire forsook art for politics, and who has already been mentioned. At the 4th September he became Director of Telegraphs; Gambetta subsequently made him Postmaster-General.

In those days, *i.e.* during the earlier sixties, it was almost taken for granted that Crémieux, though he might not abandon an academic interest in politics, would not re-embark in an active political career. It was thought and even whispered that the Second Republic had permanently shattered all his illusions with regard to the permanent establishment of the republican régime, just as they had shattered those of Lamartine and Béranger. Eighteen months before the fall of the Second Empire he re-entered the arena, and the 4th September found him among the new rulers of France.

His arrival at Tours revived the dormant spirit of Jacobinism, the foremost article of which creed is the supremacy of the civil power over the military one. The man who throughout the whole of his previous professional—as distinct from his political—career had shown himself broad-minded to a degree, gradually rallied to the idea of a dictatorship to be represented by himself, with a coadjutor in the shape of his wife; for this new would-be Robespierre, a robust septuagenarian and not a puling lump of physical chaos like the other, was neither a misogamist nor a misogynist, but a somewhat henpecked husband. Mme. Crémieux had not only accompanied her spouse, and of course taken up her quarters with him at the archiepiscopal palace, but was invariably present at the Cabinet Councils, and now and again condescended to illuminate the discussions by her advice. A journalist of imperialistic tendencies put it graphically:

'There is nothing changed in France; there is not even one woman more to guide the Ministerial debates; Mme. Crémieux has replaced Empress Eugénie.'

Until the advent of Glais-Bizoin, these councils consisted of two Ministers, holding eight portfolios, plus Mme. Crémieux, the trio being sometimes transformed into a quintet by the admission on a footing of equality, albeit that they were simple delegates and not Ministers, of Count de Chaudordy and M. Laurier. The former was the delegate of Jules Favre, the improvised Minister of Foreign Affairs, who knew as much about the most elementary usages of diplomacy as a board-school boy knows about cuneiform inscriptions. He was, however, sufficiently sensible not to expose his ignorance more than he could help, and prevailed upon M. de Chaudordy to assist him with his experience. I shall probably have occasion to write fully about the diplomatists (?) of the Third Republic, but it is as well to record here the self-abnegation of the talented nobleman who had been the *chef-de-cabinet* of the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, and who, in spite of his antipathy to anything and everything savouring of republicanism, was sufficiently large-minded to throw in his lot with republicans like those of the Government of the National Defence, even at the risk of being confounded with the 'chevaliers du pavé' so contemptuously alluded to by Bismarck.

Nevertheless, M. de Chaudordy, perhaps from instinct, perhaps for reasons carefully pondered, had put as much space as possible between himself and his *personnel*, and the other fractions of the Government lodged under the same roof. The Delegation of Foreign Affairs was perched at the top of the archiepiscopal palace, positively under the eaves, and access to its offices could only be had by way of a spacious and somewhat oblong apartment resembling the private chapel of some princely dwelling. There was an altar at one end, a kind of throne at the other; there were stalls along the side walls, and, suspended from the ceiling, a lighted lamp shed its soft and semi-mystic glow over the whole. Above the stalls there hung pictures of a religious nature, and M. de Chaudordy may have considered the room as a kind of Rubicon which not many of the adherents of the Government would willingly cross. This is not a mere idle fancy on my part. Many of those who did traverse the apartment did so against their will. They did not like the altar and the 'episcopal honours,' *i.e.* the cross, the crosier and the holy vessels, the passing of which entailed genuflexions, practically enforced by an aged priest who watched over them, and who opined that a republic with such an approach to it was not altogether hopeless.

Different from M. de Chaudordy was M. Clément Laurier, who was the delegate of the Minister of the Interior, namely of Léon Gambetta, whom he had taken under his especial patronage, and who without him would not have succeeded in subsequently negotiating the Morgan Loan, which was about the only act of the Government of the National Defence capable of standing the test of serious examination. M. Laurier was also a lawyer and unquestionably a man of talent. Nevertheless people asked what had been the cause of his sudden sprouting into a 'republican with all his bristles up,' dragging monarchies and monarchical institutions through the mud in his utterances and official communications. Though by no means an avowed or even tacit supporter of the preceding régime, M. Laurier had given no signs of such intense democratism. The surprise on people's part was quite justified. Before the Third Republic had run the length of its first Presidency, M. Laurier resumed his place among the Moderates, and he was among those who contributed to the fall of Thiers.

Meanwhile he made and unmade prefects and subprefects, as if he liked it, and took his rôle of a supplementary 'Saviour of France' quite *au sérieux*, much more probably than M. de Chaudordy. It is not difficult to explain the difference between him and M. Laurier; M. de Chaudordy had been taught to look upon France as *une grande et élégante dame*, who, whatever her fate, should accept it with dignity, and maintain throughout her chosen language. She should not fling 'son bonnet par dessus les moulins' even for the purpose of replacing it by the Phrygian cap. M. Laurier was, for the moment at any rate, in favour of the Phrygian cap, and thought that the language should match the headgear. To all these, plus the rarely absent Mme. Crémieux, there came on the 18th September M. Glais-Bizoin. His advent was not heralded by any demonstrations. He walked from the station to the Hôtel de Londres, 'remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,' like Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' and proceeded to refresh the inner man in one of the smaller dining-rooms on the ground floor, the windows of which looked out upon the courtyard. But for his particular headgear—a grey beaver of the orthodox pattern—and his somewhat unorthodox way of appeasing his hunger, he would have altogether escaped notice; as it was, some of the idlers at the hotel, attracted by his hat, which, like Auber, he rarely doffed, and by his 'cramming process,' began to watch him; and among these there were a couple of journalists who instantly recognised him, for Glais-Bizoin was a familiar figure to every scribe in Paris, whether eminent or obscure, and what was more, he was liked by every one, for, though utterly incapable and useless as a politician, he was kindness itself and ever ready to help those who had fallen by the way. He was, I believe, a man of large and independent means. He professed to serve the republican cause 'for the glory of his Creator and the love of humanity.' He invariably insisted upon this in his public speeches, which insistence one day elicited the remark of Renan: 'He had better leave off; if he goes on like this, he'll spoil the glory of his Creator and destroy the love of humanity.' It was Sadi's reproof to the toothless old man who stood mumbling the Koran in the street 'not for gain, but for the love of Allah and the glory of his prophet.'

No one ever knew exactly what happened at the interview between Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin; but at a late hour on that evening the newly-arrived delegate knocked at Admiral Fourichon's door, and told him, with consternation in his voice, that next morning Crémieux intended to resign not only his own portfolio, but all those with which he was vicariously intrusted. He looked upon Glais-Bizoin's coming as a proof of Favre's duplicity and of his wish to oust him from his position. It would appear, however, that Glais-Bizoin's consternation was short-lived, and that, after a little conversation, he and Fourichon were getting reconciled to the idea of dividing between them the portfolios to be rendered vacant by Crémieux's expected departure.

Although thirty years have gone by since then, the rest of what happened, unless new documents come to light, must remain a matter of conjecture; but the episode, simple enough in all conscience, conclusively shows two things. In the first place, there was the mutual distrust on the part of all these men of the smallest move, and of the faintest initiative not concerted. At the mere glimpse of Glais-Bizoin, Crémieux jumped at the instantaneous conclusion that Favre, either by himself or in conjunction with his colleagues shut up in Paris, intended to curtail his self-bestowed dictatorship. Thus threatened, or fancying himself thus threatened, Crémieux proclaimed his intention of throwing up the game. In the second place, there was the wonderful readiness of all those novices in the art of governing to replace each other at a moment's notice in the most responsible positions. I have seen that kind of thing at third-rate theatres, where there is no system of 'under-studies' worth speaking of, and where the merest 'mummer' offers to replace *à pied levé* the London actor, who from illness or other causes is suddenly prevented from fulfilling his starring engagement. Thirty years have gone by, but the republicans still retain these two characteristics.

To return to Crémieux, who had evidently reconsidered matters during the night; for when Admiral Fourichon and M. Glais-Bizoin entered the council-room at the Archbishop's palace in the morning, M. Crémieux was in his usual seat. He made not the faintest reference to his contemplated retirement; he did not even allude to his interview with Glais-Bizoin; and the Government of the National Defence proceeded to discuss matters with the utmost and by no means normal calm.

I shall not follow step by step either the deliberations or the actions of this triumvirate: not much would be gained by recounting the grotesque scenes between these three while France was writhing in the iron grip of the conquerors. Before Gambetta's arrival Admiral Fourichon had relinquished his vicarious tenure of the Portfolio of War, which, on the principle already alluded to, was taken up conjointly by Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin. Fourichon still remained the Minister of Marine, *i.e.* of a sea-force, almost entirely operating on *terra firma*, cut off from the rest of the world, of a sea-force which had curiously neglected its opportunities of damaging the merchant fleet of its enemy, of a sea-force which at that particular moment seemed to have no *raison d'être*.

Meanwhile, Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin, two septuagenarians, might consider themselves the masters of that part of France which as yet was uninvaded, and did thus consider themselves. This seemed sufficient for their ambition; they failed to understand why their colleagues in Paris should not be equally satisfied, and why they had despatched this young man to them. Odd to relate, though, Crémieux had not the misgivings with regard to the appearance of Gambetta upon the scene which he had felt in the case of Glais-Bizoin; he did not for one instant imagine that this 'prentice hand in revolutions, as in his inmost mind he termed Gambetta, could counterbalance his, Crémieux's power or damage his prestige. If there was any anxiety at all on Crémieux's part, it was in connection with Gambetta's well-known intemperance of language and his reputed laxity of morals, both of which Crémieux feared would scandalise the eminently respectable fixed inhabitants of the ancient capital of Touraine. Adolphe Crémieux was essentially a moral man in the ordinary acceptation of the term, even if we admit that ugliness is particularly conducive to virtue. Crémieux, moreover, deluded himself with the belief that this 'young man' would not be proof against his hitherto unfailing charm of manner, and that his clever wife by her maternal solicitude for him would complete the contest for the greater glory of the Tourangeau republic —or is it Tourangelle republic?—which *en attendant mieux*, these two were administering. Quietism being as contagious as alarmism, Glais-Bizoin was equally calm, at any rate outwardly.

It took not much more than thirty minutes after Gambetta's arrival to undeceive them. He did not amuse himself with *les bagatelles à la porte—anglicé*, the clowning outside the show—he asked to be taken forthwith inside, namely, to the Archbishop's palace, where Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin were awaiting him.

I did not get to Tours for more than a week after Gambetta. I reached it by way of Bordeaux, whither I had come from London by sea, and I only stayed a couple of days, the real object of my journey being Versailles. Hence the following is an account at second hand of what happened immediately after Gambetta's arrival. My informant was an eye-witness of the scene. He was a French journalist with whom I worked as late as December 1882, the time of Gambetta's death, at a paper edited by the sons of Jules Simon. There was no difficulty whatever for a journalist of more or less standing in getting access to any governmental ceremony. On the contrary, the new rulers rather encouraged the assumption that republicans had nothing to conceal.

The reception of Gambetta took place in the improvised council-room of Mgr. Guibert's palace. Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin put on their most majestic behaviour. Odd to relate, I am unable to say if Admiral Fourichon was there. When the account was given to me, I forgot to inquire, and I have never since repaired the omission. The reader may put his own construction upon my neglect, from my point of view, and I fancy I had and have a pretty correct idea of the relative importance of these men from their point of view and from that of their colleagues. The government of the National Defence, then, was represented by two ministers—delegates, pretending to welcome a third; M. de

Chaudordy and his *personnel* keeping discreetly in the background and merely fulfilling decorative parts. I say pretending to welcome, for the attitude of these three was by no means cordial, although they shook hands with each other and even indulged in those accolades which always raise a smile on the lips of Englishmen. 'J'embrasse mon rival, mais c'est pour l'étouffer,' says Nero after having embraced Britannicus in Racine's tragedy. If Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin did not exactly wish to crush the life out of Gambetta, they must nevertheless have felt the force of Le Sage's line in *Le Diable Boiteux*, 'Nous nous embrassâmes et depuis nous fumes des ennemis acharnés.' Gambetta was the least constrained of the three. He took things jauntily, recounted the balloon-voyage he had just accomplished, touching lightly on his hair-breadth escape from the shells of the Germans. Unlike the Venice Senate, Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin refused to be impressed by the recital of 'dangers pass'd.' They had not to sanction the *fait accompli* of an abduction. As yet, they only suspected the intention. In a few moments, though, their suspicions were verified. 'By the bye,' said Gambetta in an off-hand way as he rose to go; 'you know that we cannot have the elections.' And before they could protest, their newly-arrived colleague added: 'I have the decree of the Government of Paris; we'll post it up to-day.' Saying which, he made for the door and disappeared. When an hour and a half later Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin passed the Prefecture where Gambetta had taken up his quarters, they found the decree, written by hand, displayed in the little wire-covered frame reserved for prefectorial announcements, and they knew that Gambetta had virtually proclaimed himself the master of France, and told the nation at large that, whether she liked it or not, the struggle against the invaders—if it was any longer a struggle—would be pursued to the bitter end, and that no elections would interfere with Gambetta's decision. For that was practically the tenor of the document, which a couple of hours later still was placarded in print all over the city and transmitted to every commune of France. And France tamely submitted to the dictatorship of two lawyers, one of whom had already virtually become the tool of the other. France submitted just as she had submitted seventy-seven years before to the will of another lawyer whose spell of fiendish power history has transmitted to us under the title of 'the Reign of Terror.' Victor Hugo had it that 'poverty is a crucible into which fate flings a man each time society stands in need of a god-like hero or of a diabolical criminal.' A revolution in a Latin nation seems to be the caldron into which the three witches of ambitious sedition, *alias*, the goddesses respectively of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, fling a lawyer each time that nation requires a sublime patriot for her salvation. In nine cases out of ten the result is not a sublime patriot, but a taciturn or loquacious and arrant self-seeker. In the one case there emerges from the hissing, seething compound of human passions a Benito Juarez, in the other nine a Maximilien Robespierre or a Léon Gambetta.

IV

GAMBETTA AND THE TOURS RÉGIME

More curious than the acceptance of Gambetta at his own valuation by the nation at large was the passive acquiescence in his dictates on the part of the honest men either in his immediate entourage or in frequent contact with him;—and not only their passive acquiescence in, but their slavish obedience to them. Gambetta was an arrant physical coward from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, in spite of this much-vaunted balloon journey; Thiers, as arrant a coward as he was an old man, and in bodily fear of him. Thiers was, moreover, absent from France, and when he returned, it was perhaps too late to take the literally infuriated bull by the horns, even if his own scheming had not shown him the wisdom of leaving things alone for the moment. Thiers' temporary withdrawal from action, though not from the scene of action, after his return from the Courts of Europe, and of his journey to Versailles and to the beleaguered capital, was prompted by his dishonest self-seeking and personal policy. Never was any one more thoroughly guided by the hackneyed precept of 'reculer pour mieux sauter' than he. But there were others, men of courage and determination, whose courage and determination would not even have been wanted to make an end of Gambetta, and they let him work his way unmolested. They virtually subscribed to his dictum of 'War to the Knife,' because Germany would not forego the advantages she had already won.

What did they wish Bismarck to do? To subscribe to a treaty of peace which would make the resumption of war within a few years a foregone conclusion, and probably under conditions far more disadvantageous to Germany than those under which the campaign then in progress had been started? Bismarck's view of such a risk had plainly been foreshadowed in the interview at midnight of the 1st September at Donchery, to which I alluded in the previous chapter; and since then nothing had occurred to cause Germany to abate one jot of her pretensions. Or did they expect Bismarck to grant them an armistice on their own terms—that is, to throw open the capital to the rest of France without a guarantee for the maintenance of the advantages Germany had already won; in other words, to allow France breathing-time to hold her elections, but also breathing-time to provision Paris and to reorganise her armies. If Bismarck had complied with such a request, Germany in general, and Prussia in particular, would have had the right to brand him as a traitor to his country, while the world at large, and Europe especially, would have laughed his pretensions as a statesman to scorn, and would have been justified in classing him in that respect below those who had preferred the request.

'To hold elections with Paris cut off from the rest of France would have been practically impossible,' says the would-be impartial observer, who, unfortunately for that impartiality, ignores or is ignorant of the fact that Paris, in the choice of her parliamentary candidates, has never, absolutely never, been influenced by the rest of France, even when she elected, as she did some two years later, a candidate sent almost directly to her from the provinces. If, at the time of which I am treating just now, there had been some provincial candidates for the honour of representing the capital, and if they had been provided with merely plausible credentials, Bismarck would have given them safe-conducts, as he did in the case of Thiers at the end of October. If after their election they had wished to leave the invested city to join the new parliament, they would have been allowed to traverse the German lines under the same protection.

Nevertheless, one is willing to admit that those elections would have been attended with great difficulties. It is because of those difficulties that I called the decree of the 16th September a mean and contemptible sham, and some of those who signed it dupes, for I am loath to confound men like Jules Simon, Crémieux, Glais-Bizoin, and Fourichon, with self-seekers like Gambetta, Favre, Ferry, and Arago. Although the former-named must have been alive to those difficulties, I am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. What I wish to show most emphatically, even at the risk of repetition, is the fact that neither Favre nor Gambetta wanted peace or elections, because, as I have already pointed out, both of these would have put an end to their self-assumed power. There was another reason for their objection to elections; they felt pretty certain that the nation, if consulted, would not pronounce in favour of a republic such as they dreamt of; and neither before, then, nor afterwards, did they admit the possibility of saving France except through such a republic; and that, in spite of France having unmistakably shown her dislike of being saved in that way. Hence they foresaw that a new parliament would not differ sufficiently in its composition from the one they had so cavalierly broken up, as to afford much hope for the régime desired by them and the adventurers who surrounded them, and who made noise enough and swaggered enough to be mistaken inside and outside France for the majority of the nation.

Something, however, had to be done to invest the usurpation with a semblance of legality, for republicanism is ever anxious to display its motto 'Right,' in order to establish a distinction between itself and Caesarism, supposed to depend upon 'Might.' It is, perhaps, because of this over-advertised intention of keeping within constitutionalism that there have been so few really great republicans in our days, for even if they removed constitutionalism from their paths, the shadow of it seems to haunt and hamper them. The tyrant who usurps frankly in defiance of all law is much better advised. He acts upon Karl Moor's, or rather Schiller's axiom: 'Das Gesetz hat noch keinen groszen Mann gebildet, aber die Freiheit brütet Kolosse aus'; it being understood that 'Freiheit' in such a case means 'his liberty' to do as he likes. The Government of the

National Defence—collectively—did not dare to go quite as far as this at the outset. To begin with, the bourgeois population of Paris, not a very formidable opponent at any time, and still less of a formidable assailant, was nevertheless somewhat more formidable in 1870 than in 1830, or in 1848. In 1830 the bourgeoisie was openly against the dynasty which, especially since the death of Louis XVIII., had allowed the noblesse too much latitude in its endeavours to recover its old position. In 1848, it was neither for nor against the dynasty; the Crevels of the National Guard co-operated with the mob for the glory of showing their soldierly qualities. They and the rest of the bourgeoisie had suffered some rebuffs during the eighteen years' reign of Louis Philippe, who now and again, though not often, had refused to dance to their piping. Three years and a half of republican misrule had been sufficient to show them the follies of their ways, and on the 2nd December 1851 they were practically on the side of Louis Napoleon, who, it should be remembered, paraded the streets of the capital on that day in the uniform of a general officer of the National Guard. Nearly eighteen years of unprecedented material prosperity during the Second Empire had created, if not a deep-seated attachment to the dynasty, at any rate a sort of cupboard love for it on the part of the bourgeoisie. In France, above all, 'le véritable Amphitryon, est l'Amphitryon où l'on dine'; as Molière took care to teach his countrymen, while Rotrou before him told them to pay no heed to 'l'Amphitryon où l'on ne dine pas.'

Hence, on the 4th September 1870, the Paris bourgeoisie, and perhaps the provincial also, were probably imperialists to a man, or if not that, at least anti-republican, remembering as they did the horrors that had marked the Second Republic, and the stagnation of trade that had prevailed until the period when nearly every one began to detect the coming Emperor behind the Prince-President.

The régime that tried to balance itself on the carcass of the Second Empire bade fair to be more democratic, if left uncontrolled by elections, than the régime of 1848-51, for in reality the race for power between Favre, Gambetta, and Co., and Blanqui, Pyat and Co., had been a very close one, in fact so close as to prompt the defeated to have another try at the first possible opportunity. The reader should bear this in mind; it will enable him to look upon the Commune from a broader point of view than hitherto he has been asked to look. The bourgeoisie, of course, were not ignorant of this neck-to-neck performance, and of the determination with regard to the future it had bred in the minds of the nominally defeated. If the bourgeoisie had been thus ignorant of that determination, the events of the 5th October would have enlightened them. On that day Gustave Flourens, the brother of one of the subsequent ministers of Foreign Affairs, repaired at the head of his battalions to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and on the pretext of spurring the Government of the National Defence to more energetic action, claimed the 10,000 *chassepôts* stored in the armouries of the State. In vain did Trochu, Dorian (the Minister of Public Works), and

Jules Ferry, who at that time was only the Secretary to the Government, endeavour to pacify him. When he emerged from the Hôtel-de-Ville, sword in hand, his legions hailed his re-appearance with frantic acclamations of joy, the band intoned the 'Marseillaise'; and to those who knew ever so little of the history of the First Revolution, the scene foreshadowed a revival of the 'terrorising of the sections.' Gambetta, Favre, and the rest of the members of the Government, but notably Jules Simon and Jules Ferry, had all been adopted by the Socialists and the 'Internationale,' not only as the promoters of 'necessary reforms,' but of 'necessary destruction,' and they knew that sooner or later the defeated ones of the 4th September would claim a share of their usurped power. The bourgeoisie had to be assured that no such share would be given, and it was to assure them in that respect that the decree of the 16th September was mainly invented. Favre and Gambetta were perfectly aware that the document held out the hope to the bourgeoisie of repairing the blunder they, the bourgeoisie, had committed in letting the revolutionaries and republicans have it all their own way, and, moreover, held out that hope of repairing the blunder without risk to life or limb, a great consideration with the French bourgeois, whether metropolitan, provincial, or rural. The second aim of the document was to pacify Blanqui, Pyat, and their followers—by which I do not mean the turbulent rabble, ready to leap at their command—by opening the prospect of power to them. If they disposed of the majority in the land, as they averred they did, they might enlist that majority in the promised elections, and thus, without firing a shot or shedding a drop of blood, oust their rivals, who had been too quick for them on that memorable Sunday, the 4th September. The third aim was to throw dust into the eyes of the European Powers, whose intervention the Government of the National Defence solicited through Thiers.

The authors of the document soon discovered that, as far as its three aims went, it might have been left unpublished. The bourgeoisie would not be conciliated, although it preserved an attitude of tolerance towards the Government of the National Defence, which the latter might well have imitated with regard to the Commune after it was vanquished, for, in truth, between the usurpation of the 4th September and the usurpation of the following 19th March, there was not a pin to choose, save that the former succeeded and the other failed. The bourgeoisie, then, would not be conciliated—or, to employ the right word, converted. The alternative to the Empire in their minds was not a republic, not even a Conservative republic with Thiers at its head, but a restored monarchy. That this is not a surmise on my part is clear enough if one considers the composition of the National Assembly. On the other hand Félix Pyat, in *Le Combat*, and Auguste Blanqui in *La Patrie en Danger*, spoke with no uncertain voices about their intentions of frustrating all attempts at establishing such a monarchy. In fact, neither the composition of the National Assembly of 1871, nor the Commune which followed hard upon its opening, were mines sprung on a set of unsuspecting men.

When, in addition to this foreknowledge, it became patent, as it must have done from the beginning of Thiers' mission, that the European Powers would not stir in behalf of France on the simple promise of elections, Gambetta for one flung off the mask, a most apparent one at the best of times. He made one bold bid for the whole of the power, the partial possession of which had already proved so sweet to the autocrat within him, and had intoxicated him to such a degree as to make the mere idea of its relinquishment drive him frantic with rage. Blindly infatuated with himself though he was, Gambetta fostered no illusions with regard to the possibility of his dictatorship in the invested capital. On the 5th October occurred the episode at the Hôtel-de-Ville to which I just now referred. When Gustave Flourens emerged on the Place de Grève, amidst the acclamations I have described, Jean-Baptiste Millière, who was shot—and to all appearance innocently shot at the fall of the Commune, either by order of General Gallifet or his ordnance officer Captain Garcin—happened to be among the densely packed masses. He stretched forth his arm, and in a stentorian voice, semi-tragical, semi-ironical, thundered forth: 'Now then, ye crowd, give tongue to thine applause; make unto thyself a king of Paris, give unto thyself a dictator.' ('Allons; foule, applaudis; fais un roi de Paris, donne toi un dictateur.')[1] On the 6th, Gambetta departed in his balloon. Whether his departure was influenced or merely accelerated by the scene described I am unable to say with certainty.

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[1] Millière was one of the Deputies for Paris in the National Assembly. He was a sincere but misguided patriot, and sacrificed, under the Second Empire, a lucrative position to his political opinions.

It is certain that whatever history had failed to teach Gambetta, it had taught him that a dictatorship such as he aimed at must be based on the goodwill of the greater part of the army, and not on a mere understanding with its chiefs. He was thoroughly alive to the risk of attempting to establish such an understanding with men like Trochu, Vinoy, and Ducrot, the three generals who disposed of the sole available remnants of the armies of the Empire, with the exception of a comparatively small number of troops from Algeria, and a still smaller number of recruits who, at the beginning of the war, had been left in the depôts. Both these were scattered over the eastern and western provinces. It is more than doubtful whether the army in Paris would have endorsed such an understanding if it had been arrived at. The spirit of indiscipline was rife; defeat upon defeat had made the men sceptical with regard to the capacity of their leaders; the only one not absolutely discredited was Vinoy, for he, at any rate, had saved some of the troops at Sedan by his timely retreat towards the Belgian frontier at the risk of being impounded, which fate he averted by an unopposed side-movement. Yet, dissatisfied as they were, or just because they were dissatisfied with their chiefs, the regulars would not have suffered the imposition of a Carnot who had not even the scientific training of a Carnot to justify the attempt at 'organising victory.' The improvised troops that fought within the next few months under Chanzy, Faidherbe, Aurelle de

Paladines, and Martin des Pallières had, as we shall see directly, no such want of confidence in their leaders. While the latter themselves had at least two valid reasons for obeying Gambetta when he appeared on the scene of their operations, and virtually no reason for refusing such obedience. The refusal, to be logical or even plausible from the soldier's point of view, ought to have come on, or immediately after, the 4th September. The generals still available could have peremptorily declined to recognise the mob-elected or self-elected Government of the National Defence, and made a *pronunciamento* or retired altogether.

Had Gambetta carefully weighed all points of the problem when he decided to leave Paris; or was the step a spontaneous one, dictated by the situation in the provinces? In describing the scene on the Place de Grève on the 5th October I asked part of the same question, and was obliged to admit the lack of positive evidence as a basis for a reply one way or the other; yet I am inclined to think that from the very outset Gambetta meant to be absolute master of the capital—if possible; or, in the event of failure there, in the provinces. His plans to that effect were not devoid of astuteness. Of course, had he succeeded in reducing all his colleagues, Trochu included, to mere cyphers, the provinces would probably have been left to shift for themselves as far as his personal efforts were concerned. It is, however, doubtful whether he ever had much faith in the capital's faith in him. The bourgeoisie disliked him on account of his blatant 'demagogism'; the proletariat began to mistrust him almost immediately after his election to the Chamber. They positively hissed and hooted him in February or in March 1870 at a meeting at Belleville. Those among the working men who had little or no fault to find with the Imperial régime that gave them bread-and-butter and more, resented his constant attacks on the powers that were; the final drifts of which attacks their untutored minds instinctively detected. They had perhaps heard of Mirabeau, and how he would have rallied to the monarchy of Louis XVI. had he, Mirabeau, lived long enough and been able to command the price he set upon his conversion. Up to the very last, the Empire was not defenceless from a journalistic point of view, and the defenders could quote—and, for the matter of that, misquote—history as well as the republicans. And though they, the Imperialists, refused to look upon Gambetta as a Mirabeau, or anything like a Mirabeau, they did not fail, after that scene at Belleville, to draw attention to the fact of his repeating Mirabeau's tactics, already adopted successfully by Emile Ollivier, of making systematic opposition the stepping-stone to the premiership of the Empire, and the proletariat did not confine its reading to the Opposition journals. Personally, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, but for the fall of the Empire, Gambetta would have made a bid for power in that way. I have no belief whatever in the disinterestedness of the majority of political men of the three Latin nations of Europe. They all want something, either money, power, or titles. I am not concerned at present either with Italy or with Spain; I am only concerned with the Third Republic, whose pseudo-legislators I have watched for nearly thirty years; and those years of observation have convinced me of this. When during that memorable August sitting one hundred and eleven years ago the Duc de Liancourt moved for the payment of the members of the National Assembly, he did his country a most irreparable injury, although his intention was an excellent one. He practically created the professional politician of the future, and, but for the measure he advocated and carried, there might have been no 'Reign of Terror,' for Maximilien Robespierre, frugal though he was, especially at the beginning of his career, would have been compelled to return to Arras when the two hundred francs he had borrowed at his departure were spent. It is a low view to take of things; I cannot help that; one does not write in the heroic strain about jackals and 'guinea-pigs' in the new sense of the word; and at the outset Gambetta was no more; the fee he received for his attendance was his consideration, and he could not have secured it except by forcing the key-note of demagogism. In order to hide his lack of talent, he had to shout louder than the rest, some of whom were certainly endowed with it; but those who applauded him—as distinct from those who blamed—remembered the shouting and suspected the drift of it when the Empire fell. They wanted no dictator, no matter what his title, 'Ni Dieu, ni maître' was their motto. It may be taken for granted that the would-be master never lost sight of that fact, but if he did for ever so short a time, the apostrophe of Jean-Baptiste Millière was calculated to remind him of it.

As for his dictatorship in the provinces, it had been practically prepared for him by none other than Glais-Bizoin. Whether the most colourless, the most mediocre, but by no means the dullest of all the members of the Government of the National Defence enacted the dictatorial 'warming-pan' knowingly or unconsciously, I have never been able to decide for myself, and the information I have endeavoured to gather on the subject left me nearly as ignorant as before. Nearly—not quite. There is a small group of well-informed, absolutely impartial Frenchmen, all of whom, moreover, knew the Breton gentleman well, who maintain that his constant differences with Fourichon were of his (Bizoin's) own seeking, and not the result of secret instructions from Gambetta. That small group feels convinced that Bizoin meant to conduct the military operations in the provinces against the Germans, and that, in pursuance of that wish, he worried the admiral-delegate of the Minister for War into resigning his functions. 'The blunders that marked Gambetta's "reign" at Tours and Bordeaux,' they say, 'would have been committed all the same, but they might have been less frequent, therefore less disastrous; and that not in virtue of Bizoin's superiority as an amateur strategist to Gambetta, but because of their different temperaments. The alternative between Bizoin and Gambetta as acting War Ministers,' they add, 'would be sufficient by itself to show into what hands the National Defence had really fallen. But with Bizoin there would have also been less violence and less arbitrariness, but not less tinsel and "high-falutin," although the final result would have been similar in nearly every point.'

Thus far the little group and their argument must not be dismissed unanswered. Gambetta aped Carnot; he professed to win battles from a distance, he 'ordered the victory.' From what I knew of him, Bizoin, in spite of his years, in spite of his almost entire extinction of voice, probably would have ridden into battle with the troops, for he, Dorian, Crémieux, and Jules Ferry were the civilian members of the Government not utterly devoid of physical courage. Bizoin had a tendency to imitate the great Napoleon. He who had joined Lamartine in his vigorous protest against the removal of Napoleon's ashes from St. Helena to Paris, struck Napoleonesque attitudes at the camp of Conlie when reviewing the troops —or the undisciplined, woebegone masses, standing knee-deep in mud, who were supposed to represent troops. He trudged up and down the lines with his hands behind him, then came to a sudden stop, and, nodding his head, whispered—'Soldiers, I am pleased with you.' But he had courage, and it is just because of this courage that I doubt whether he would have struck his flag before Gambetta unless there had been a previous agreement between them, which agreement he was too honest to break.

The assumption that without the advent of Gambetta the arbitrariness and violence would have been less, though not a jot of the tinsel and the 'high-falutin' would have been abated, is upon the whole correct. To begin with, neither arbitrariness nor violence could have gone beyond the limit to which Gambetta carried it, and the wonder up to this day is that among all those whom he bullied and hectored, both military and civil, there was not found an officer, a journalist, or a former parliamentary colleague, either to twist his neck or to send a bullet through his brain, and thus rid France of a scourge. It need not have been murder or assassination, an ordinary challenge would have done the trick, for Gambetta was a coward from nape to heel. It would appear that later on, at Bordeaux, there was a plot to carry him off, of which plot he got wind, and which he frustrated; but at Tours, where I spent some days in the middle of October, one could only come to the reluctant conclusion that he had the whip-hand of every one. And what strikes one as still more wonderful, the submission in most instances was voluntary. After all, why should ordinary tradesmen, innkeepers, adventurers, and the rest, not have obeyed, when one of the master-minds of France, the same who had written

> 'Par les petits tyrans les peuples sont froissés,'

persisted in looking on this petty tyrant as a great man. For on the morning after the scene described in my previous article, M. Antonin Proust took Gambetta to Victor Hugo, who at the termination of the interview stamped him as 'great.'

I am not exaggerating when I say that at that moment there was not a man in the ancient capital of Touraine who dared to call his soul his own. The editor of *La Sarthe*, having commented rather epigrammatically on M. Gambetta's doings, was flung into a dark cell, refused communication with the outside, and arraigned afterwards before a council of war, who, it should be said, unanimously acquitted him. But it wanted all the influence of the Marquis de Talhouet and several erstwhile deputies to prevent Gambetta from bringing M. le Nordez before a court-martial, presided over by a captain of *francs-tireurs*, selected *ad hoc*, which would probably not have acquitted the editor.

The following extracts from one of my note-books did duty thirty years ago as the foundation of some articles :—

'I arrived at Tours, luckily for myself, with only a small bag, which for more than three hours I had to carry from house to house in search of a lodging. I entered five or six cafés, asking the waiters or the cashier at the desk to take care of it for me. I was absolutely worn out with my railway journey from Bordeaux, whither I came from London by sea. Both cashiers and waiters refused, not exactly impolitely, but in an off-hand way. They are simply coining gold, for at a rough guess there are about fifty thousand strangers here (exclusive of the improvised troops around the town), all of whom want feeding, and to all appearance feeding well, for there seems to be no lack of money. After four hours' trudging I managed to secure the attic—it is no more—in which I am writing this, as it would not do, even if it were convenient, to sit writing for any length of time in a café, unless one had at least a dozen friends or acquaintances around who might vouch for one's identity in case of need. For case of need, *read* in case one were accused of being a spy. By standing on a chair and lifting myself by the sheer force of my wrists on to the sill of the window in the sloping roof, I might catch a glimpse of the room in which Honore Balzac was born. It would be a waste of time, for involuntarily I should be led to think and talk about him, and great though he was, and much as I admire him, he never wrote a scene—not even in his *Chouans*—to equal those one witnesses here at every moment.

'Only, those scenes are not tragic, they mostly border on the comic. With the exception of a half-dozen English and American correspondents, the whole of the floating population appears to have gone stark mad; and what is, perhaps, more remarkable, the cause of the aberration is in every instance the same. They all suffer from "Gambetta on the brain." The effect of the name is various. On the majority it acts as a stimulant, on the minority as an irritant. At dinner—for I have succeeded in getting a decent dinner, which is in itself an exploit—it fills the intervals between the courses, short though they are, for there is another batch outside clamouring for food.

'If France is to be saved by inventive genius from further invasion then her deliverance is surely at hand. There is a lantern-jawed fellow who is explaining to his neighbour his new invention for destroying the enemy by the thousand at each discharge of his machine. I have not been able to make out whether it is a gun, a catapult, or a mortar. There were, I should say, about a hundred persons dining in that room, and to my knowledge this is the fourth inventor among them. He buttonholed me while we were waiting for our dinner, and as I had been listening to the explanation of three other inventions within the previous forty minutes, and as I felt very hungry, I begged him to defer his communication until later. I do not suppose for a moment that the Hôtel de Bordeaux, where this happened, has the exclusive monopoly of ministering to the comforts of the inner inventor; there are at least five or six large hotels at Tours, besides the smaller, and in addition to these, several good restaurants, so I am not far wrong in computing the number of inventors intending to "free the sacred soil of France from the polluting presence of the hated German" by means of their machines at three or four score.

'And all these gravitate towards one man—Gambetta. The name rings upon the welkin from morn till night. It would want a very clever onomatopœic method to convey with any degree of accuracy the pronunciation of it by those various petitioners for his favour—by the motley crews that crowd the streets, by the Garibaldian officers and erstwhile pontifical Zouaves, by the journalists and *franc-tireurs* and former deputies who stand vociferating outside the cafés; but one thing is certain, the name is on everybody's lips. It reminds one of the story of King Psaphon and the parrots which had been taught by a servile courtier to shout, "Psaphon is a great King." That Psaphon did not become a great king proved his inherent littleness, for praise, even if undeserved, is often a more powerful incentive than blame, though deserved. Is Gambetta a mere Psaphon? I have the answer ready, but will not write it, lest I should have to accuse myself of allowing my prejudices—albeit that they are founded upon knowledge, and not hearsay—to run away with me. Not once, but a dozen times to-day have I heard comparisons instituted between Gambetta and his lieutenant, M. de Freycinet, on one side, and Lazare Carnot and Prieur on the other. I am not altogether ignorant of French history, and have my own views with regard to the part of Carnot in the victories of the first Republic, but after all is said and done, Carnot and Prieur had received a solid military training. It would not do though to venture on such a remark here, or for that matter on any remark casting a doubt on the final victories of the French; my day's work, therefore, has been strictly confined to listening.

'At the Hôtel de Bordeaux, where I got my dinner, the big-wigs of the coming Republic forgather. There is Jules Grévy, the author of the famous amendment of 1848 on the choice of a President of the Republic; there is Cochery, the author of the famous amendment inspired by Thiers which virtually forced Gramont's hand, and made war inevitable; there is Glais-Bizoin, etc., etc., all of whom take the dictatorship of Gambetta *au grand sérieux* now. Of course, they do not mingle with the ordinary mortals in the common dining-room; trust to a republican *qui est arrivé* for being exclusive. They are the assiduous guests of Madame Pélouze, who is no other than the daughter of Robert (?) Wilson, the virtual founder of the Paris Gas Company, and the sister of Daniel Wilson, the would-be rival of the Duc de Gramont-Caderousse during the heyday of the Empire. Madame Pélouze, whose demesne (Chenonceaux, of Diane de Poitiers fame) is within a few miles from Tours, occupies the whole of the first floor of the hotel. But though exclusive and determined to keep their own counsel, especially in any and every thing that might impair the prestige of the Government of the National Defence, stories do leak out. Here is one. General Martin des Pallières, who is still suffering from the wounds he received at Sedan, has nevertheless taken the command of the 1st Division of the 15th Corps. Naturally, he wanted maps to conduct his forthcoming operations, and the only one available was that of a *Guide Joanne* (say Baedeker's or Murray's), bought at a bookseller's at Tours. The delegate of the Minister for War (Gambetta) and the chief of his staff (M. de Freycinet) were, it appears, not better off in that respect, which did not prevent the former from planning his strategic movements and the other from approving them. Gambetta, on his arrival at Tours, had said that this map *had to do*, inasmuch as the plates of the official maps of the general grand staff in Paris had been sought for in vain.[1] A young officer, a former pupil of the École Polytechnique, and a native of Tours, remembered, however, that the Mayor of Tours had a pretty large atlas of France, and on examination the particular map wanted proved more comprehensive than the one in the guide-book. The next thing to do was to produce ever so many hundreds or thousands of copies of the map by photography, and that is what the officer proposed, but the delegation of war refused to sanction the measure, alleging that no credit for the purpose had been opened, and it took a full fortnight before the objection was removed by some of the habitués of Mme. Pélouze's salon, to whom the young officer had applied as a last resource. Meanwhile from his armchair Gambetta had ordered the fortifying of the Bridge at Blois, dismissed a half-dozen generals and put as many civilians in their places, notably a M. de Lissagaray, a cousin of Paul de Cassagnac, but, unlike the latter, a republican of the most pronounced type. Comment on all this is unnecessary.'[1]

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[1] They were found afterwards on board a man-of-war at Cherbourg, but no explanation was ever vouchsafed how they got there.

Thus far the notes which, after a lapse of thirty years, I fancied warranted reproduction. I have omitted several, of the accuracy of which I have become doubtful since, inasmuch as they echoed cock-and-bull stories so persistently propagated as to deceive for the time being even the most experienced journalists, and I need not say that three decades ago I was not one of these.

The rest of France was far from acquiescing in the supremacy of the autocrat at Tours in addition. The crisis was eminently suitable for the manœuvres of political free-lances and adventurers. For twenty years or more they had been kept under, for it must not be supposed that the Second Republic was less severe in its methods of repression and ostracism than the Second Empire. I could show that many, Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin among the number, were already established in London on the 2nd December 1851, hence the Coup d'État did not send them thither. Hundreds, however, of a less calibre than Blanc and Rollin had availed themselves of Louis Napoleon's senseless leniency in allowing them to return, and from the moment of that return they carried on a propaganda, not of republicanism, but of anarchism, though the word was not as current then as it is now—of separatism, of communism, of—one scarcely knows what to call it. There is, however, no need for a word; their nameless doctrine is contained in a document received by Thiers immediately after the outbreak of the Paris Commune, and inviting him to trust for support in the South to the republican party. According to the missive all the Southerners are republicans, for they do not 'accept any superiority whatever, whether springing from birth, fortune, talent, or services rendered. *They scarcely bow to the superiority* which the laws *attribute to public functions.*' Is this the manifesto of a madman? Not at all. It is the communication of the new procurator-general of Marseilles to the Keeper of the Seals, and can be found among the archives relating to the inquiry on the events of the Commune. The writer, Thourel, had among his former clients a M. Gent, whom under the Second Republic he had defended before the Council of War of the Sixth Military Division on a charge of affiliation to a secret society, but whom he had not been able to save from transportation. M. Gent had returned long ago, and the 4th September proved his opportunity. He started a movement having for its aim the detaching of seventeen departments in the South from the central government (such as it was), and the formation of these into a league of which, naturally, he should be the chief. Divested of all verbiage, M. Gent's aim was to create for himself a situation analogous to that created by the authors of the 4th September in Paris and at Tours. I need scarcely point out that the defence of the invaded territory was absolutely foreign to M. Gent's ambition. Twenty-one departments of the South-West manifested a similar intention. In the West itself the thirteen delegates of as many departments forgathered at Rennes to organise a local autonomy independent of the Tours dictatorship. The only corner of France where ideas of separation did not prevail was the North. The enemy was too near to admit of such fantastic schemes of parcelling out the country.

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[1] 'The second thing I remember was an enormous strip of calico outside a bookseller's shop, with the announcement, "Dictionnaire Français-Allemand à l'usage des Français à Berlin." In less than two months I read the following; it was an extract from the interview between Bismarck and Moltke on the one side, and General de Wimpffen on the other, on the eve of the capitulation of Sedan. "You do not know the topography of the environs of Sedan," replied General von Moltke; "and seeing that we are on the subject, let me give you a small instance which thoroughly shows the presumption, the want of method, of your nation. At the beginning of the campaign you provided your officers with maps of Germany, when they utterly lacked the means of studying the geography of their own country, seeing that they had no maps of your own territory." I could not help thinking of the bookseller, and wondering how many dictionaries he sold during the first few days.'—*An Englishman in Paris*, vol. ii. p. 201.

In common fairness to the West, it should equally be said that its aim, though unquestionably a separatist one, was not in any sense a republican one. The aim in this instance was inspired by the hope of being able to provide for the national defence in a more orderly and less ridiculous and contemptible manner than the Tours Delegation, and also, perhaps, by the hope of paving the way for a régime which should command some respect from the representatives of the various powers, who had taken up their temporary quarters near Gambetta. The observant, and there were many observant men at Tours, were not the dupes of the grave and absolutely correct attitude preserved by Lyons, Metternich, Nigra, and Okonneff. They knew that no man of breeding and education, however lost to all sense of the comic, could contemplate, without amusement, the strutting and swaggering of Gambetta, and even of Crémieux, on the rare occasions of the visits of the Corps Diplomatique. Though the latter preferred at all times to communicate with Count de Chaudordy, their presence at Tours convinced the two lawyers, a very young one and a very old one, but both Israelites by race, *que c'etait arrivé*; to use the popular locution, *anglicé*, 'that it had come off,' as the less refined backer of horses would exclaim after a successful but hitherto very dubious betting transaction. They felt persuaded that they, the scions of an oppressed race, were having a voice in the affairs of Europe, and it is doubtful whether they would have changed places with Benjamin Disraeli.

In reality, the representatives of the foreign powers had followed the Delegation to Tours, less to confer than to observe, and to transmit their observations to their respective governments. It was an ungrateful task, yet the material hardships it entailed were compensated for in another way; for hardships there were even to Lord Lyons, who, with the exception of Mgr. Chigi, the Papal Nuncio, was better off with regard to comfort than any of his fellow-diplomatists. The Offenbachian scenes they witnessed made up, however, for much. The Agamemnon, Ajax, and Achilles of 'la Belle Hélène' were modest, unassuming creatures compared to Gambetta, who rarely appeared without his furs—and expensive furs. I have never been able to make out why Gambetta did not don a uniform; I feel certain that the temptation must have been very strong, and I can only attribute his escape from it to the influence of Freycinet, who was a gentleman in the best acceptation of the term, and who, in spite of his many political mistakes and martial promptings, has, under most trying circumstances, always remained one. Though everybody around Gambetta did pretty well what he liked, under the pretext of obeying his orders, his abstention in the matter of regimentals compelled the others to follow his example. Nevertheless they found a compromise: they sported gold-braided képis and caps more or less resplendent. Their headgear was, however, nothing to that of M. Steenackers, the chief of the telegraphic department of the postal and governmental service. Not that M. Steenackers had the remotest notion of what telegraphy meant. He could no more have transmitted the simplest message on the simplest instrument than I can. But from his point of view he had played an important part in the events of the 4th September. It was he who gave the orders to open the outer gates of the Palais-Bourbon to the mob, and when those orders were not obeyed, he opened the gates with his own hands. In his estimation such a service could be rewarded by nothing less than a seat in the Cabinet (?), but in that headlong race for power along the quays M. Steenackers came too late. He was nearly shown the door, for though in his despatches to the provinces at

6 P.M. on the 4th September the new Minister of the Interior, viz. Léon Gambetta, distinctly stated that 'the population of Paris had pronounced the deposition of the Imperial dynasty, and proclaimed the Republic,' he did not, even at that moment, care to be confronted with the man who had let the rabble in. *Vile donum* expressed his habitual attitude towards those who had carried him to power. M. Steenackers, then, was about to be shown the door, when some more prudent counsel prevailed. In the hurry of appropriation, a trifling appointment—only that of the Director of Telegraphs — had been forgotten. M. Rampont had been appointed Postmaster-General, but the wires had not been thought of. M. Steenackers ran to take possession of them. He proved himself sufficiently intelligent, though those who would credit him with the organisation of that pigeon-post which carried the microscopic photographs into Paris are in error. That was the invention of M. Barresnil, who had been sub-chief in the chemical department of the Mint under M. Pélouze, the erstwhile husband of Jules Grévy's Egeria.

M. Steenackers also thought that he had come to stay, and on the rare occasions of his contact with the diplomatists—rare because Gambetta kept the few good things of that description almost exclusively to himself — M. Steenackers was overpoweringly and embarrassingly polite. Like the majority of his suddenly promoted fellow-ministers, Favre included, he wished to show the representatives of the old monarchies *qu'on savait vivre*; for Bismarck's spiteful sentence, *chevaliers du pavé*, had made the round and rankled. M. Steenackers did not go as far in his courtesy as a subsequent member of the Commune, Cavalier, otherwise 'Pipe-en-bois,' who, during one of Lord Lyons' visits to the Hôtel-de-Ville, offered to send for some beer for him, but he was exceedingly attentive to the English ambassador. He entertained him with plans for a future telegraphic congress 'when France should be herself again,' little witting that when that time came he too 'would be himself again.' Like the rest of his colleagues, Lord Lyons took it all in good part. One is not very angry with the lad who has got a new tool-box, and says he is going to build you a new house, and as Rochefoucauld has it, 'We all have sufficient strength to bear the misfortunes of others.'

Grévy and the circle at the Hôtel de Bordeaux, republicans though they were, were also fair specimens of the average sober-minded and well-educated bourgeois, who is not unfrequently a sceptic in disguise as far as violent changes of régime are concerned. He does not avow his scepticism like Alphonse Karr with one sentence—'*Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*'; but the history of his own country since 1789 has, if it has taught him anything at all, taught him to look with suspicion, not at the intention of building a new house, but at the uprooting of all the foundations of the old one in order to make room for the new. And when the would-be builders of the latter began to display flags before the roof was fairly on, Grévy and his familiars were disgusted.

There was a small balcony at the Tours prefecture which was to Gambetta what the proscenium is to the up-to-date English actor-manager. It was his favourite platform from which to make a speech, for which there was no more necessity, either practically, æsthetically, or ethically, than there is from the same points of view for 'the few remarks' addressed to first or last night's audiences by our histrionico-managerial celebrities. The greatest French actor of the century, Talma, only made one short speech in his life; it was necessitated by the political situation; he did not say farewell to his audience, because, like Molière, he was struck down while in harness. The greatest English actor of the century, Edmund Kean, made, as far as I remember, only one speech on his retirement; Macready, with whom I would not otherwise compare him, did the same. The greatest French manager that ever lived, Dr. Louis Véron, of the Paris Opera, never made one. The greatest Anglo-French manager of the century, Charles Fechter, was equally chary of 'spouting.' The greatest statesman of the century, Bismarck, only once addressed the people of Berlin from his balcony; it was on the eve of the Prusso-Austrian War. Gambetta took to that balcony as a duck takes to the water. He would have delighted in being smothered at each appearance with flowers; or, at any rate, in having a bouquet presented to him. In this, as in the case of the uniform, the unerring taste of Freycinet prevailed, but he could not prevent the patriotic gifts of standards. Suspicion was rife that those flags were manufactured, if not at the expense of the recipient himself, at least at the expense of those in his immediate entourage who knew of his weakness. They had, moreover, to find the principal protagonist of the manifestation accompanying the presentation, and the protagonist had to be an unfamiliar figure to the Tourangeaux. The first selection was a *coup de maître.* One day the report went forth that a lady had travelled all the way from Marseilles in order to feast her eyes on the saviour of her country. People expected to see a Cornelia with or without her 'connubial jewellery,' or, at least, a Mme. Roland, but the worthy matron from the Phœnician city did not at all come up to that standard. She conveyed the impression rather of being one of those *marchandes à la toilette* whom Gavarni delighted to depict. She was squat, ungainly, and from fashion's point of view an utter failure. She was accompanied by a couple of dozen urchins and hobbledehoys, bellowing the 'Marseillaise,' and by a bevy of dames, supposed to represent the Tourangel equivalent for a deputation of Paris market-women. One of these, her headdress all awry, carried the flag, which was surmounted by a new-shaped Phrygian cap, and inscribed with the words, 'Offered to the Army by the Ladies of Tours, 1870.' From all I heard—for I was not there at the time — the ladies of Tours had nothing to do with the gift. My informant, an English journalist to whom, in after-years, I succeeded as Paris correspondent, told me some months later at Versailles that the female escort of the Marseillaise matron was mainly composed of dames from the floating wash-houses —*bateaux-lavoirs.* He saw the ceremony from the beginning to the end. According to his account, to which I am wholly indebted, Gambetta got wind of the non-elegant appearance of the procession, refused to come out of his shell, and sent a secretary of the Prefecture to do the honours instead. The Marseillaise matron had, however, prepared certain verses which, she was determined, should not be lost to posterity, and by the aid of a ladder scaled the small balcony, where she recited them to an admiring crowd. This was far from encouraging to the National Guards of Touraine, who had also made up their minds to present a standard. That function took place a week later, although it had originally been fixed to precede the other. It was better managed; and Gambetta condescended to appear. Unfortunately, he attempted to be original, and in his attempt hit upon the to him attractive idea of representing the three colours as the attributes of the Republic, viz. 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.'

Thus far my informant, who, though he instinctively suspected Gambetta's ignorance of the symbolism of national colours, did not know how egregiously he had blundered.[1] Among the company at the Hôtel de

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[1] The tricolour as the French national standard is four centuries and a half old. It was adopted by Charles VII. in 1449, when he made his triumphal entry into Rouen. The first national flag of France was blue, with the image of Saint-Martin in the centre. It was called *la chape de Saint-Martin*, the cloak of Saint-Martin, and adopted by the kings of France in virtue of their hereditary right to the title of Abbots of Saint-Martin in the Fields, on part of which site is built the Square des Arts et Métiers and its Conservatoire. Later on, the kings of France having become the Abbots of Saint-Denis, the crimson oriflamme, or, to be correct, the crimson flag with the golden flames, given by Dagobert to the latter abbey, replaced the cloak of Saint-Martin. Finally, the kings of France adopted the white flag, to distinguish it from the English standard, which, originally white, the colour of Saint-George, had been changed by the

Bordeaux there were educated men, besides Jules Grévy and Thiers, who did know, and in consequence winced.

They winced still more at Gambetta's treatment of what there was left of the generals of the Empire. I have dealt elsewhere with the consequences of that treatment, for the rancour it produced has been festering for thirty years,

English into crimson, in order to affirm, during their invasions of France, their sovereign rights over the invaded country. It is a curious feature, this exchange of national colours between two countries which were more often at war than at peace with each other. But the red, white, and blue, nevertheless, remained the royal colours, and became more prominent as such in all the architectonic and decorative arrangements of their residences under the Bourbons, up to the revolution of 1789. Symbolically, these colours represented to the whole of the world the three qualities contained in the cry of the Dutch, when they also unfurled them against the Spaniards. 'Blue for virtue, white for candour, red for valour,' they shouted. Under Louis XIII. Versailles, which had originally been a hunting-lodge, and which, even after its initial transformation, Saint-Simon called a *château de cartes*, and Bassompière a *chétif château*, was decorated in such a manner as to make the outside correspond to the colours of the House of Bourbon. The roofs and the chimneys were ornated with vases and copings of blue which, with the white of the stone and the red of the bricks, represented the tricolour. The inside of the erewhile royal residence has still many tricolour decorations, among others the flagged flooring of the chapel. The crack regiments of the old French monarchy wore the king's colours, blue, white, and red; and a hundred and thirty years ago, or, to be exact, one evening in November 1771, the two head-gardeners of the Trianon, the Richards, father and son, gave Louis XV. an after-supper surprise in the shape of an illumination in front of the Orangerie of the Petit-Trianon. It consisted of a design in coloured glasses, with the words 'Long live the Well-beloved,' surmounted with the king's monogram; the whole in letters of six feet high, made of white daisies on a ground of red and blue flowers of the same kind. In 1789 the national colours adopted were blue and red; it was La Fayette who suggested and carried the addition of white, as he did not wish to break entirely with royalty. In short, the three colours were those of the House of Bourbon, before they became the national colours of France, and 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' had nothing to do with their adoption.

and has been further aggravated by anti-Semitism, which in its latter manifestations is also nothing else than the doubtful and belated antidote to Gambetta's offensive anti-clericalism and obtrusive, but nevertheless spurious, pro-Semitism. Any one aspiring to the rôle of a statesman should, no matter what his personal religion or lack of religion may be, remember the lines of Racine's *Athalie*—

> 'J'ai mon Dieu que je sers, vous adorez le votre :
> Ce sont deux puissants Dieux. . . . '

V

THE RESISTANCE TO PRUSSIA

Young though I was in 1870, I had had fifteen years, all but a few months, of practically uninterrupted experience of Paris, under the guidance of two men who had been there for more than half a century, who knew the history of France as theologians know the Bible, who knew the capital as a London 'boating man' knows the reaches and eyots of the Thames, and the Parisians as an old 'whaling' skipper knows the crew of his vessel.

My experience of the provinces had up to that period been more restricted. Save for a few pleasure trips during the prosperous days of the Second Empire, I knew practically nothing of provincial France. I had, however, read much about the part provincial France had enacted in the various upheavals consequent upon the changes of régime since 1789, but I did not think that those scenes of disorder would be repeated, still less surpassed, with the actual danger of the foreign foe, not at the gates, but considerably within the gates. Rightly or wrongly, neither the invasion by Brunswick at the beginning of the great Revolution, nor those by the allied armies in 1814 and 1815, seemed to me to have been as productive of France's thorough military humiliation and utter social chaos as the one I was witnessing threatened to be. It was, perhaps, because I was watching actual facts, instead of having them conveyed to me many years after their occurrence through the medium of books. Yet that was the impression, and in consequence I expected provincial France to rise to a height of hitherto unparalleled patriotism, by sinking for the time being all political differences. I expected the Republicans of the 4th September to set the example of patriotism by believing in the patriotism of those who had served the vanished régime. I expected . . . well, never mind what I expected. Here is what I saw and what I heard.

M. Laurier considered it incumbent upon him not to be behindhand with his colleagues in publishing a high-sounding phrase. It ran as follows: 'Confronted by the Prussians, all parties have ceased to exist; there remains only France.' Acting upon the tacit invitation, MM. Cathelineau, de Stofflet, and de Charette, the latter the well-known leader of the Papal Zouaves, but all three avowed champions of the Legitimist cause, proceeded to raise one or more corps of *franc-tireurs*, after having obtained the sanction to that effect of Glais-Bizoin, who to the very last cherished his illusions with regard to the potentiality of those improvised troops. A Prussian general called them 'herds led to slaughter.' Glais-Bizoin gave the sanction, and almost immediately afterwards, though entirely unconnected with the first-named fact, the Legitimist sheets published a letter from the Comte de Chambord which was something like a manifesto. Thereupon, the republicans of the West raised the alarm; the new prefects of those regions, unquestionably more anxious to maintain the Republic than to save France, roundly abused Glais-Bizoin, and denounced him as a royalist conspirator. Crémieux had to interfere by showing that the volunteers of Charette, Stofflet, and Cathelineau had no other ambition than to fight the Prussians.

I shall deal with the volunteers first, for not four-and-twenty hours passed at Tours without the appearance of a new batch or corps upon the scene. One day there came a hundred of them from the south wearing enormously broad-brimmed felt hats, and dressed in sable garments all over. They looked like funeral mutes, and they were evidently determined to act up to their appearance, for, wondrous to relate, they marched through the principal streets without opening their lips, a proceeding somewhat different from that of the rest. As a matter of course, the crowd was tragically impressed; a hundred Frenchmen—and Frenchmen from the south—stubbornly determined upon holding their tongues are apt to impress any crowd, whether consisting of their own countrymen or of aliens. The impression, however, did not last long. The volunteers felt thirsty, and their chief, who wore a still more enormous hat than his men, signalled to them in the middle of the Rue Royale to halt for refreshment. That spoilt the whole tragic part of the business, for when those Southerners had opened their mouths there was a difficulty of closing them again. The moment drink was in speech was out. They informed their admirers that they had come from the Department of the Gers, and that they had made a terrible pact. It will be remembered that Gambetta had also made a pact. In fact, everybody gave notice of having made pacts; it was like an epidemic of pact, with notices pasted up all round of those who were infected. The pact of the sable-clad volunteers was as follows: A hundred and one, including their leader, they had started from their homes; a hundred and one they would return. If one of them was killed, the whole would perish in their efforts to avenge him. According to Burns, when Francis Grose, the antiquarian, was dying, the Devil got notice of the impending demise, and came flying to the bedside. 'By God!' said Satan, 'I'll want him, ere I take such a damnable load.' Ponson du Terrail, the novelist, who was both at Tours and at Bordeaux, and who was an adept at working out such pacts in fiction, evidently had not heard of that one, else we might have had Death's views on the load thus offered. Glais-Bizoin was, however, much struck with the arrangement, and expressed himself to that effect when the hundred-and-one 'inseparables' called upon him.

Glais-Bizoin was probably pleased at finding a corps at one with their leader, for such unity was rare, not to say phenomenal. As a rule, those defenders of France were in open revolt against their chief, and Glais-Bizoin, who, curiously enough, had come to be regarded by them as their titulary saint, was selected to adjust their differences.

Republican though he was, Glais-Bizoin was not a Spartan. He sacrificed to the graces, as I have already shown, in the matter of dress; he cultivated literature in the shape of play-writing. Unfortunately the field he tilled was a barren one, or worse, for where he dreamt of flowers, he got nothing but cabbages; and he was not averse to a jovial evening round the flowing—or to be correct—the steaming bowl. The volunteers of a certain M. Arohnson invited him to give his judgment in the latter manner. They offered him, at their arrival at Tours, 'un punch,' in the French sense. The complaint of the volunteers against M. Arohnson was, that he kept them too far away from the battle-fields. A second count in the indictment was with regard to arrears of pay. A mousquetaire and a lansquenet (landsknecht) of Louis XIV.'s time had an altercation. 'Psah,' quoth the mousquetaire, 'I serve for glory, you serve for money.' 'Each serves for what he is most in need of,' replied the other. M. Arohnson's volunteers could neither get the halo coveted by the Gascon, nor the halfpence craved by the German, so they marched to M. Arohnson's on the Mail and made a disturbance, going even as far as to fire a pistol into the air, which fortunately hit no one, but produced a considerable effect.

Glais-Bizoin intervened, made M. Arohnson 'stump up,' by threatening him with a court-martial, and immediately after the settlement of accounts, deprived him of his command in favour of the elect of the volunteers themselves, a Pole with the name of Liponski, under whom, it is but fair to say, they gave an excellent account of themselves at the battle of Châteaudun. Thus were military matters peremptorily arranged by civilians, even to the deposing of generals by simple prefects of a fortnight's standing. Glais-Bizoin deprived M. Arohnson of his command, which action would not have been of much consequence, but for its marking the revival of the proceedings of the Convention, which aimed at, and succeeded in, depriving the military of all preponderant influence in the army, and of making them subservient to the dictates of the civil power. The civil commissioners whom the Convention despatched to the various army corps made short work of disobedient or merely delinquent officers, no matter what their grade. Custine, Beauharnais, Flers, Biron, and others, including Houchard, perished successively on the scaffold for imaginary offences against the sanctity of the Republic, particularly Houchard, who asked to be delivered from the *sans-culottes* who were hampering his movements and preaching insubordination to his disciplined troops. This version of the story is generally denied, because the revolutionary tribunal, ashamed probably of sending a general to the guillotine for so trivial, and, as they knew in their own hearts, well-founded a remonstrance, invented a pretext. They tried Houchard for having allowed himself to be defeated on the northern frontier. Houchard produced authentic proof to the contrary. Not only had he vanquished the enemy, but his commander-in-chief had reproached him with having too ardently pursued the beaten foe. 'In that case,' remarked President Dumas, 'thou art guilty of having vanquished too much.' Houchard was executed on the same day. A captain, whose name has not come down to us, was shot without the semblance of a trial by order of Saint-Just when he was inspecting the besieging army before Charleroi. It was for no graver reason than because the captain's battery was not in apple-pie order, according to Robespierre's henchman. Jourdan, the general commanding-in-chief, for protesting against this summary execution, would have fatally shared the captain's fate but for a miracle of his own making, the victory of Fleurus.

To give those predecessors of Gambetta and Favre their due, they played the game of the guillotine fairly. When they lost they paid up. Even Marat might have surrounded himself with precautions which would have frustrated Charlotte Corday's sublime removal of him. He was under fifty when he perished; Gensonné was forty-one. The rest of the wire-pullers of the Revolution who went to the scaffold, not altogether without dignity, were all under forty, Carrier dying at thirty-eight, and Lebon at twenty-five.

All these men knowingly risked their lives. The only man of the 4th September—I am now speaking of the principals—who would have willingly gone into battle was Glais-Bizoin; the only secondary one who actually courted danger was Anatole de la Forge, the new Prefect of the Aisne, who did make an attempt to defend St. Quentin against the Prussians, and who, though unsuccessful, was wounded in the attempt. The courage thus displayed seemed so phenomenal to the members of the National Defence and their successors that they elected him subsequently the supreme arbiter in all 'affairs of honour.'

While in the upper stories of the Prefecture all kinds of grades were distributed to civilians absolutely ignorant of the elementary knowledge necessary to the making of a lance-corporal, below, Gambetta, seconded by Freycinet, distributed the chief military commands, revoking certain generals, and replacing them by others. Lest I should be accused of exaggeration, here is a sentence from Chanzy's deposition before the Commission of Inquiry into the events of 1870-71. 'Perhaps M. de Freycinet had dreamt that he was a Carnot. I am unable to say. Certain is it that he drew up plans, and imposed them upon the commanders.' We shall see directly what Bourbaki had to say on the subject.

When Gambetta and Freycinet took the direction of the military operations, the troops that had been massed round about Arthenay had retreated somewhat in confusion to the left bank of the Loire, practically leaving the road to Orléans free to the enemy. As a matter of course, the latter took advantage of the opportunity to occupy the city. Thereupon Gambetta recalled General de Lamotte-Rouge, and put Aurelle de Paladines in his place. This was before the episode of his hasty journey to, and equally hurried return from, Orléans which I mentioned in the previous chapter.

When Aurelle de Paladines had been invested with his command, Gambetta turned his attention to the East, where the Germans threatened Épinal. General Cambriels, somewhat against his wish, had been invested with the command there by Glais-Bizoin before Gambetta's arrival at Tours, for Cambriels had been seriously wounded in the head at Sedan. In fact, he looked more like a mummy wrapt up in bandages than like a general capable of active service, when Glais-Bizoin happened to meet him at the Tours railway station. Cambriels was on his way to Amélie-les-Bains to rest and to get cured. Glais-Bizoin pounced upon him, took him there and then to Fourichon, and the affair was settled in a few minutes, the disabled soldier not feeling justified, disabled though he was, in refusing his services when his country had so much need of them. Cambriels' wounds re-opened, and admirable soldier though he was, he could not bring to bear upon his task the necessary energy, and above all the necessary firmness, for with the improvised troops which a German general discourteously but not unjustly stigmatised as herds, the slightest relaxation of discipline was bound to be fatal. As a consequence, his thirty-five thousand men soon became disorganised. Gambetta, who, accompanied by Apuller, paid a visit to the spot, made confusion worse confounded by sending Garibaldi, of all men, to repair the evil. I admired as much as any one the famous condottière; his name, however, was not a fetish to me as it was and still is to many Englishmen; but even the latter will not seriously maintain that the name had the slightest significance in connection with military discipline. Moreover, to Frenchmen, and especially to conservative Frenchmen, who are invariably sincere Catholics besides, it was positively distasteful. The higher grades in the army could not and did not forget Mentana, and Cambriels was among the number. In addition to this there was a law which has never been revoked, though it is rarely quoted, forbidding a foreigner to assume the supreme command of a French army, or part thereof. It was recently quoted in connection with the appointment of Field-Marshal Count von Waldersee to the chief command of the Allied forces in China. In the instance under consideration, it was pointed out to Gambetta somewhat timidly by Cambriels, and more directly by M. Keller, the former deputy for the department of the Upper Rhine. Both might have saved their breath, for all the good they effected.

Gambetta made the welkin ring with his cries for a general to operate in the North. M. Anatole de la Forge, whose name has already been mentioned in connection with the defence of St. Quentin, could after all not be nominated to such a post, although it would not have surprised many had he been thus nominated; for the word ‘surprise’ had practically been eliminated from the vocabulary of the majority of sensible spectators. Unexpectedly there came a letter from Brussels, informing Gambetta of Bourbaki's arrival from London in the Belgian capital, and of the offer of his sword to the Government of the National Defence. Gambetta shied at the idea of intrusting Bourbaki with no matter how small a command. All republican tall talk about ‘country’ notwithstanding, there never was a French republican who would willingly abandon his schemes and his personal ambition, both of which he loftily calls his principles, for the sake of his country. Thiers had private information about the war before the faintest sign of it appeared on the horizon. Through the intermediary of the Duchesse de Mouchy (Princesse Anne Murat), he offered to reveal his knowledge to Napoleon III. in exchange for the French premiership, an arrangement the Emperor could not accept, inasmuch as at that time he had just inaugurated the era of government by party —as it is generally understood—and could not dismiss Émile Ollivier without a vote adverse to him of the Chamber. There is no necessity for me to adduce further instances of so-called republican principles; it would be the same story over again.

Hence Gambetta, who if anything was more vulgarly, though not more thoroughly, selfish than Thiers, for that would have been impossible, could not understand Bourbaki's offer. It puzzled and worried him. Bourbaki had been the Emperor's aide-de-camp; Bourbaki's sister, Mme. Lebraton, was still in attendance upon the ex-Empress; Bourbaki himself was unquestionably mixed up with the negotiations said to have been initiated at Metz by that mysterious individual, Régnier, who remained an enigma up to the day of his death at Ramsgate some fifteen or sixteen years ago. Bourbaki unquestionably left Metz with a safe-conduct, travelled to England, and had interviews with the ex-Empress, the drift of which was supposed to be the restoration of the Empire by means of the troops then shut up in Metz, the siege of which would have been raised in virtue of an understanding with Bismarck. All this is involved, but no amount of special pleading can entirely remove those charges from the memory of Bourbaki. This much is, however, certain: he had as great a right to work for the return of the Bonapartes as Gambetta had of working for the establishment of a republic. The right was perhaps less questionable on Bourbaki's than on Gambetta's side. When Gambetta accepted his offer, he ought to have been loyal with him. If he felt himself unable to accord that loyalty, he should not have employed Bourbaki.

Gambetta and Freycinet, who had clamoured for a general to operate in the North, in response to which clamour Bourbaki had offered his sword, did not give him that command. After the 'Hundred Days' Louis xviii. had Michel Ney tried and executed, disbanded a great many of Napoleon's regiments, and weeded out most of the rest of Napoleon's officers. But to those of the latter whom he retained he made a special point of showing that his trust in them was absolute. He gave Cambronne, the same who flung a more forcible than elegant monosyllable at his assailants at Waterloo in reply to their summons to surrender, the command of the Lille division, a frontier post of importance, if ever there was one. It was the act of a sovereign, a diplomatist, and of a man of the world. Freycinet, who always possessed infinite tact, could not prevail upon Gambetta to imitate Louis xviii.'s example of giving unlimited confidence. Bourbaki was offered the command-in-chief of the army of the Loire, which he declined. It was, however, impossible for Gambetta to state the real reason of that offer instead of the command of the Northern division. Impervious to the finer feelings though he was, he knew that such a statement would bring down upon him the resentment of every officer in the army, from the oldest general to the youngest subaltern, and that the greater part of the civilian population—in fact, all but *his* republicans—would sympathise with that resentment. The distinct warning not to bespatter French generals had as yet not come to him; it only came a few weeks later, but he felt that it was on its way.

The intuition of a gentleman would have saved the situation. Had Bourbaki been told delicately that the task of operating in the Northern provinces was deemed too onerous for him, the avowal, even when coming from a civilian Minister of War, might have pained but could not have offended him, regard being had to the abnormal responsibilities of that minister.

The real reason was Gambetta's distrust of Bourbaki, and his regret at having at all accepted his offer. He was, however, determined not to lose sight of him. Hence the army of the Loire seemed to him the most suitable command whence to exercise his espionage. He allowed Glais-Bizoin to spread the most preposterous comments upon Bourbaki's appearance, 'which was not that of a great commander'—this is literal—'and not calculated to inspire enthusiasm.' Meanwhile, the offer of the command of the Loire was repeated and declined a second time. Unlike Gambetta, Bourbaki did not hesitate to give his reasons. At his arrival at Tours, he had been told by Admiral Fourichon, who met him at the station, the real condition of affairs with regard to the army of the Loire. There was an utter insufficiency of material and men, and the adjacent country, whose inhabitants were kept more fully posted about the doings of the

Tours Delegation than those at a greater distance, did not feel disposed to make the sacrifices demanded of it. They had no confidence whatever in the results of the war itself, and objected to the way it was exploited by those who had undertaken to conduct it. Bourbaki did not repeat all this in so many words to Gambetta, Crémieux, and Glais-Bizoin, for that would have been giving away his informant, but he gave them to understand that 'the affair was not a good one,' to use a very inelegant and inadequate translation of the French original, which conveys much more than that. Nor did the equally idiomatic retort of Glais-Bizoin, one of his three interlocutors, 'Moins une affaire est bonne, plus le patriotisme fait un devoir de l'accepter' (The less good an affair, the greater becomes the duty of the patriot to accept it), shake Bourbaki's resolution. He had by that time taken the measure of the patriots of the Tours government, and gained a clear perception of the motives that had prompted the far from 'good affair' of the National Defence. He had weighed the incapacity of some, the money-spinning of others, and the overweening conceit and misplaced ambition of all; and his patriotic duty did not prompt him to 'create' forlorn hopes—as distinct from pursuing them to the bitter end when once irrevocably engaged in them.

It would be idle to pretend that Bourbaki was a soldier of genius; yet he conceived a scheme which, if ably seconded, might have borne some fruit. He offered to raise for the Delegation a small army of about 20,000 men in the North with which to operate on Sedan, in order to recover the stands of arms which the French had left behind at their departure as prisoners of war.

The Delegation hummed and hahed at the proposal. The idea of affording Bourbaki a chance of effecting a juncture with Bazaine, at that moment still shut up in Metz, did not appeal to them; it might lead to a trap for the baby, and as yet unchristened, republic. Meanwhile the Delegation, and notably Gambetta, were determined not to lose sight of the ingenious general, and Gambetta, than whom there was no greater blunderer where the slightest tact was required, set on the general's track one of the very detectives who but a few weeks before that were specially deputed for the surveillance of the imperial residences. As a matter of course, he was immediately recognised, and one day, on his way to Count Vimcreati, the Italian military-attaché gave him, the detective, a good dressing. The detective apologised, saying that he was obeying orders, and added that, after all, he had chosen the to him disagreeable mission rather than leave it to some one who might make it unpleasant to the general. He, however, showed his face no more.

Though every hour was precious, several days were lost, but finally Bourbaki got his powers signed, and departed for the North, unquestionably followed by other spies whom he did not know, and who, it could be proved, put themselves into communication with the local authorities. They, instead of assisting him in his task, hampered him at every turn, so that, in spite of a few unimportant but successful engagements, he could not bring up his troops to the required number for carrying out his original plan or plans before the capitulation of Metz put an end to all his further hopes in that respect. Bourbaki returned to Tours. It was then that Faidherbe was invested with the command of the army of the North. The choice was an excellent one. Faidherbe might have proved a tough adversary to the Germans had the war been prolonged. His previous services under the Second Empire were decidedly remarkable: it is doubtful, though, whether they weighed half as much with Gambetta as his reputed republicanism. Even that, under the circumstances, was not surprising. But why did Gambetta take it for granted that a soldier of imperialist tendencies like Bourbaki would not be as loyal to a republic as a soldier of republican tendencies like Faidherbe had been to the imperial régime? This is a short digression forced upon me by a momentary consideration of the attitude adopted towards Louis Napoleon's former aide-de-camp, to whom I have endeavoured to be absolutely impartial, while not slurring over his suspicious journey to England.

After his return to Tours, Bourbaki would have acted wisely to decline all further commands. It is hard for a soldier of fifty to remain inactive when his country needs the services of every man in her direst trouble. The sentence of Spinola to Lord Herbert of Cherbury, 'Inactivity is sufficient to kill any soldier,' expresses in times of peace the warrior's dream of glory; in times of war it conveys the agony of a nightmare in which that same soldier sees his fellows butchered without his being able to stir either hand or foot for their delivery. It is no wonder, then, that Bourbaki accepted the command of the army of the East with the mission to push on to Dôle and to operate so as to relieve Belfort, which was closely invested: the same Belfort which, during the negotiations for the Treaty of Frankfurt, Thiers offered to forego in consideration of a reduction of the war indemnity by a milliard, on the plea that one can always recover a town, but never a milliard. Bourbaki fought some successful engagements on the 8th, 12th, and 15th January 1871, but on the 16th and 17th he found himself effectually confronted by Von Werder, who had come up by forced marches to bar his further progress. On the 18th he was compelled to beat a retreat. His troops lacked everything: they could not keep the wolf from the door for lack of provisions; they could not issue beyond the door for want of ammunition. Their privations were intensified by the terrible cold which numbed their limbs, insufficiently clad. On the 27th he reached Besançon, where, seeing himself surrounded on all sides, *and dreading to be accused of treason*, he put a pistol to his head and very narrowly missed killing himself. While he was being carried to Lyons in a critical state, his army, under General Clinchant, passed into Switzerland, where it was impounded.

The words printed in italics form part of the bold account of Bourbaki's odyssey furnished by Larousse, who in any matter affecting so-called republican principles may be trusted for putting the best complexion on them. I have borrowed them for the express purpose of showing that even Larousse did not dare to deny the fact of Bourbaki's haunting dread of being accused of treason. It was, however, not solely the dread of such an accusation that caused him to attempt his life. I distinctly state, on authority which I shall produce directly, that he was worried into the act by Freycinet, who reproached him with wasting his time before Héricourt, who kept telling him to accelerate his movement towards the South, who ordered him to move on Dôle, who expressed his opinion of there being no more than 15,000 of the enemy's troops on that point, who drew unfavourable comparisons between Bourbaki's mobility and that of the Prussians, who insisted upon Dijon being recaptured, 'in spite of the heroism of Garibaldi, who had made up his mind not to give battle until he was absolutely sure of success'; and who finally professed to see 'so painful a contrast' between the army of the French general and that of the Italian as to exclaim in a fit of bustling lyrism, 'Decidedly, Garibaldi is our foremost general.' And now let us hasten to Bourbaki's personal explanation. 'M. de Freycinet,' he said, 'replied to my first observations with words which I will not qualify as insulting, but which were certainly more than hard. The fear of having my army impounded in Switzerland, the want of food for my troops, the unjust appreciation of the Minister of War of all my efforts, so constant, so sustained, so desperate, and made in the face of horrible conditions of temperature, all these thoughts crowded upon and got the better of me, and then . . . the accident happened.'

The informant to whom I owe this verbatim report of Bourbaki's apology for his rash act belonged to his army, and he added his own version of the story:[1]—

'I went through this campaign in which the men were dying of hunger and of cold, in which the horses gnawed the bark off the trees, showing their white teeth and eating each other's tails. I was at Héricourt and at Villersexel, and passed, like the rest of my comrades, into Switzerland. Unlike me, M. de Freycinet did not see poor Bourbaki on the 25th January make his way past the vanguard and the outposts, and flit about like a shadow at the break of day, going straight in front of him in the direction of the enemy, and wander about by himself in the snow-covered fields and silent woods, with the determined intention of going somewhere—to get his head smashed.'

Eleven years — all but a few months — later, when Freycinet was about to become Minister of War under Gambetta, in the 'Cabinet of All the Talents,' M. de Bonnières flung the following in his face: 'The attempted suicide of Bourbaki was your work, M. de Freycinet. It was caused by your despatches sent overnight, by your orders and counter-orders so correctly drawn up, by your strategic inventions, by your flights of fancy put down on paper, by your dreams from a distance. All these muddled the brain of that brave man, and drove him to the excess which I cannot but blame, but which was justified by your reproaches bred from incompetence, and your hard and fast rules of an engineer.' And then came the final apostrophe: 'You are on the point of being Minister of War, M. de Freycinet. Are you going to begin the same thing over again?'

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[1] M. Robert de Bonnières, afterwards the well-known 'Janus' of *Le Figaro.*

The reader will do well to remember this, it will help him the better to understand the attitude of the Rue St. Dominique during the last few years.

I have already said that Gambetta had not the pluck of a mouse, and I shall probably say so again. It is well to insist upon this, in view of the English tendency in many quarters to accept his fame at the valuation of his successors, who have dared to raise a statue to him opposite the parade-ground where the first Napoleon reviewed his sublime, though not unconquerable, legions. There is a difference between these two usurpers, in spite of the fact of both having sent thousands of Frenchmen to their doom. There is a difference between the 'hundred days' after the return from Elba and the hundred and odd days after the ascent of the balloon from the little square of St. Pierre at Montmartre. There is a difference between the flight of Napoleon in June 1815, and the flitting of Gambetta from Bordeaux in February 1871. It is like the fall of a race-horse and the fall of a cart-horse.

Yet this low-bred adventurer,[1] who showed the white feather at the sound of a few pistol-shots near Orléans, whither he had gone to 'correct' the tactics of Aurelle de Paladines, bullied and browbeat the generals whose shoes he was not fit to clean, as neither General Bonaparte nor Napoleon I. would have ever thought of doing.

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[1] I have not written the word 'low-bred' because he was of humble parentage, but because he was taught from his infancy to regard money and the success that would bring money as the only things worth striving for. When his father saw him amidst the pomp and splendour of the Presidency of the Chamber, his only expression was, 'Léon must have a good billet

The episode is worth recounting. After the successful engagement of Coulmiers (9th November), one of the few real rifts in the clouds of French reverses, Gambetta was very anxious to get to the spot, in order to share some of the glory of that day to which he had not only not contributed, but which he had almost prevented by his meddling with Aurelle de Paladines' legions. Von der Tann was obliged to evacuate Orléans, and in a council of war, presided over by M. Gambetta and de Freycinet, it was decided to establish an entrenched camp there, which should constitute the basis of operations for the army of the Loire. So far good, but Gambetta in pursuance of his fancy strategy diverted some army corps to other commands, and when Frederick Charles, whose army had been set free by the capitulation of Metz, arrived at the beginning of December, those very army corps abstracted compelled de Paladines to abandon his positions. Gambetta was in bed on the night of the 3-4 December when the despatch announcing the complete rout of the three army corps at the disposal of the commander-in-chief, and his intention to abandon Orléans, was brought to the dictator.

In a few minutes the Prefecture was upside down,

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and earn a great deal of money. He has profited by my lessons.' Compare this with the utterances of General Bosquet's mother, of Cardinal Mauri's father, and above all, of the mother of Corbière, the minister of Louis XVIII.

Gambetta running about like a madman, 'dans le simple appareil d'une beauté qu'on vient d'arracher au sommeil,' and shrieking for Freycinet. The new Jomini arrived at last, and his sedative power, which has never forsaken him, produced its effect also in this instance, though very slowly. He talked of court-martials and councils of war, and of arresting the defeated generals with his own hand. Freycinet let him rave to his heart's content, and finally induced him to despatch a telegram which, however, still showed the groundswell of his anger, but which, curiously enough, put all the blame of the absent *corps d'armée* on the shoulders of the general who had opposed their removal, and bade him recall them at once.[1]

The future student of the real and impartial history of this war—which has not yet been written—will never cease to wonder at the submissiveness of all those generals, and at their obedience to the orders of those who had neither regular authority nor competence to condone their usurpation. Even Glais-Bizoin, who throughout the beginning of these pages is an actor of no importance, but an exceedingly instructive chorus, plainly perceived all this when he said that the illusions of the Minister of War and of his delegate were fortified by the docility and resignation of the majority of the generals.

For once in a way, Aurelle de Paladines forgot his docility and sent in reply a stinging telegram, of which Gambetta's three colleagues were to reap the benefit. They who were never consulted when fortune seemed to smile upon the dictator's efforts, were summoned in hot haste and point blank confronted with the question, 'Shall we evacuate Orléans?' They might have declined furnishing an opinion on the ground of not having been consulted with regard to the combinations preceding the battle; at this critical moment they pocketed their susceptibilities. Fourichon counselled retreat, and influenced Crémieux to the same effect; Glais-Bizoin adopted the opposite view, and opinion being thus divided, Gambetta remained perplexed. It was only at eleven o'clock that he decided upon the evacuation, and despatched a message accordingly. The telegram had not been gone very long when there arrived one from General Aurelle informing them that the 16th and 17th army corps were being directed on to Orleans and that the two other corps — those which Gambetta had removed to a distance — were being recalled.

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[1] This was the despatch intended for the public eye then and afterwards. Neither Gambetta nor Freycinet expected it to transpire afterwards that they had a private wire communicating with the 18th and 20th army corps, and that during the two-days' battle previous to Aurelle's nocturnal despatch, they had not given those *corps d'armée* a sign to march to the rescue of the hard-pressed commander.

Notwithstanding the stinging message received in the early morning, Gambetta had no doubt that the reversal of General Aurelle's decision with regard to the evacuation of Orléans was due to his tactical suggestion. There and then he made up his mind to reap the fruits of his suggestions in the midst of 'his victorious generals and soldiers'—the possessive pronoun is not of my invention —and amidst the joy of his colleagues at the apparently gladsome tidings he disappeared. No one, except Glais-Bizoin knew whither he had gone. A special train had been ordered, for the dictator is bent upon seeing everything for himself. Nevertheless, his entry into Orléans must not be a hole-and-corner one, hence the population, the generals, the prefects of the city inseparably connected with the deathless fame of Joan of Arc, have been informed of the great man's intention, and M. Pereira and his secretary have even attempted to improvise some decorations. At any rate, they are *en permanence* at the Prefecture—*anglicé*, they do not leave the building for a minute. Four o'clock is the auspicious hour of the great man's arrival. Four o'clock strikes, and half-past, and five, and still there is no sign of the wished-for presence. The general pulls out his watch at every moment, for shortly after the despatch of his message which set Gambetta on the move he had come to the reluctant conclusion that the town could not be held against the enemy in any way, and he is anxious to communicate his opinion by word of mouth. At a quarter-past five he returns to his headquarters, whence he sends the telegram embodying his views.

What had meanwhile happened to the object of all this attention? Nothing much from a purely warlike point of view, but he was not a warlike person. When his train had got as far as La Chapelle, about four miles distant from Orléans, his reverie or his conversation was suddenly interrupted by the sound of sustained firing. A halt is ordered and the information gathered leads him to suspect that the firing proceeds from the enemy, and that there is fighting at Orléans itself. His courage, or the little semblance of it he thinks he possesses, sinks into his boots, and his ardent Southern imagination already pictures the rest of the line blocked by beams thrown across it. The engine is reversed, and the train takes the road whence it came as far as Beaugency, where the retreating hero is obliged to take a 'cordial,' 'pour se remettre de son émotion'; in plain English again, 'to get rid of his funk.' At that safe distance, he thinks he will await news from Orléans. The news not being forthcoming, he concludes that the battle is going on, and that some side issue of it may spread to where he is. Discretion being the better part of *his* valour, he opines it would be more prudent to retrograde to Blois. Blois being nearer to Tours than to Orléans, he considered it more sensible to return to the seat of the delegation in order to reassure his colleagues with regard to his safety, and to stir them to further patriotism by the recital of the dangers he had passed. Naturally there was no room in that recital for the brave young fellows who, while he (Gambetta) was flying precipitately towards Blois, were resolutely facing the enemy, nor for the obscure heroes who under the uniform of the Pontifical Zouaves were confronting death at Patay, nor for the mobiles of Blois disputing inch by inch the advance of the Germans by means of barricades; least of all was there room for a few words about a certain Colonel Lutherod, serving with his own hand a battery of artillery, which Colonel Lutherod was none other than the Prince de Joinville, recently deceased, and to whom Gambetta had distinctly refused the satisfaction of dying for his country under his own name, lest his presence and that of his nephew and son-in-law in one, the present Duc de Chartres, might lead to political combinations among the freshly raised recruits.

It is virtually impossible to follow Gambetta step by step through the quagmire of lies, imposture, and above all of overweening and arbitrary confidence and impudent incompetence from which sprang the Third Republic. During the three decades of its existence, the régime has not brought forth one upas-tree—and it has brought forth little else—the germ of which was not sown during the period when Gambetta wielded autocratic power. The few honest men which the régime has produced—a smaller number than that for whose sake God declared Himself willing to save the Cities of the Plain from destruction—have been altogether powerless in their attempts to counteract, let alone to eradicate, the poison. All the scandals which have made the Third Republic a byword among civilisation had their origin in that four months' dictatorship.

VI

SOME VETERAN REPUBLICANS

Besides the republican centre at the Prefecture, which was wholly and solely managed by Gambetta, there was in Tours a practically permanent conclave, also professing to look after the welfare of the republican bantling, which had signalised its birth with hysterical shrieks and epileptic convulsions, only imposing upon those who knew no better as evidence of strength. The gathering at the Hôtel de Bordeaux, of which I have already incidentally spoken, was, however, not quite as ignorant as that. It was mainly composed of veteran republican wire-pullers, among whom were some of the legislators so cavalierly dismissed from the Palais-Bourbon on the 4th September. It often happens in France, and for the matter of that elsewhere, though more frequently in France than elsewhere, that the grandmothers of a new-born babe are, purposely and by the express wish of the parents, kept at a distance from it, lest by their old-fashioned 'coddling' they should endanger, if not its existence, at any rate its vigorous development. As a matter of course, the ostracised grandams are very wroth, and vent their anger by criticising every one connected with the new-born, from its authors down to the surgeon who brought it into the world, the monthly nurse, and even the *lingère* who provided its layette.

That was what happened in this instance. The centre of the disaffected was the drawing-room of Mme. Pélouze, *née* Wilson, the daughter of the Englishman who endowed the French capital with its first gas-works, and the sister of Daniel Wilson, the son-in-law that was to be of President Grévy. Daniel Wilson had been the semi-boon-companion and semi-toady of the *bons-vivants* of the Second Empire, such as the Duc de Gramont-Caderousse—not to be confounded with that other Duc de Gramont who wanted to take a rise out of Bismarck by forcing the war of 1870—the Prince of Orange, and the Marquis de Caux, Patti's first husband; at that moment he had ceased to be amusing, and as yet he was not instructive, although for more than a twelvemonth he had been a *député*.

Not so his future father-in-law, who was the principal figure *en permanence* of the group of republicans forgathering nightly, and even during the day, in that first-floor drawing-room of Mme. Pélouze at the Hôtel de Bordeaux, where Thiers had also taken up his quarters after his return to Tours. It is a tempting subject to dwell upon, this hostess of that republican coterie whence virtually sprang the real Third Republic—as distinct from the nominal one presided over by Thiers and MacMahon. The novelists who deal with fate and fatalism have before now evolved stories having for their factors tragic legends connected with this or that manor or castle. And the realists have shaken their sceptical heads and refused to admit the possibility of the narrators' developments, because those developments could not be proved like a mathematical proposition. This is the reason for my not dwelling upon the portrait of the pseudo-republican chatelaine of Chenonceaux, who had temporarily abandoned the erewhile dwelling of Diane de Poitiers, of Catherine de Medici, and of Louise de Vaudemont, the widow of Henri III., to become the Egeria to this by no means unattractive Numa.

In January 1879, a few hours before Grévy's election as President of the Third Republic, the late M. Edmond About said in my hearing, and in that of several other journalists standing by: 'Grévy is fond of good wine, he has an eye for a good-looking woman, and he is withal sufficiently grave; he is "cut out" for a President of the French Republic' ('Grévy est buveur, galant et grave; c'est le président qu'il faut aux Français.') The future president was then in his seventy-second year, but the compliment, for it was intended as such, was as deserved at that moment as it would have been some thirty-five or forty years earlier. In those days he was, if not absolutely a *habitué* of, at any rate a familiar figure at, the Café de la Régence, opposite the Palais-Royal and the Comédie-Française. He became the constant opponent at chess of Alfred de Musset, and the intimacy thus begun might have afforded the staid barrister an excellent opportunity for getting up a cause *célèbre*, but for his own good sense. It was shortly after Musset's rupture with George Sand, and his return—as he pretended or imagined—heart-broken from Venice. During the poet's illness there, Mme. Dudevant had virtually thrown herself at the head of a young Italian doctor, named Pagello, who was attending her lover; and when the latter recovered his health, he was given to understand that he had also recovered his liberty. The novelist had a knack of forcing the situation in that manner. Musset, who was aware of George Sand's tendency to turn every scrap of paper to account, wanted his love-letters back, and was going to institute proceedings to that effect. Grévy, whom he consulted, strongly persuaded him to leave things alone. 'If she puts your letters in a novel,' he said, 'the majority of the readers will not know whether they are fact or fiction. If you bring an action, she will return them, but she will have copied them first, and will publish them all the same, though perhaps slightly altered, and then everybody will flatter himself that he can read between the lines.' It was not the only sensational case Grévy willingly elected to forego.

All this I heard many years after the events had occurred: to be precise, I heard it on the day of Musset's funeral in 1857, which one of my relatives attended. 'Were any of Musset's acquaintances from the Café de la Régence there?' said his elder brother when he returned. 'Yes,' was the answer; 'M. Jules Grévy; no one else.' 'Ah,' was the other's comment, 'M. Jules Grévy is a downright good fellow; his heart is in the right place.'

That was the first time I heard the name of the future President of the Third Republic. I learned afterwards, that though Grévy dissuaded Musset from bringing his action against George Sand, he promised to stand by him through thick and thin in the event of his advice not being accepted, and to win Musset's case for him.

From private notes in my possession it appears that Jules Grévy at that period stood very high in the estimation of those who knew him, and who were by no means susceptible of being biassed in his favour by his avowed though not obtrusive republican opinions. He was one of the men whose republicanism was acknowledged to be free from all taint of self-seeking. 'I have not seen M. Grévy for years,' says one of these notes, evidently written in 1868, for it mentions his election to the Chamber of Deputies. 'I have heard that he has occupied the highest post of honour his fellow-barristers could confer, and I am not surprised, for even as a comparatively young man he struck me as being endowed not only with considerable ability, but with infinite tact. The fact of his having succeeded in gaining the friendship and confidence of Alfred de Musset, and of having kept these for a length of time, speaks volumes in his favour. It is not libelling the poet's memory to say that the path of constant intercourse with him was beset with thorns. Nay, Dumas was not far wrong when he called Musset "a large bundle of thorns." The most remarkable thing about M. Grévy was his memory. Paul de Musset had tested it in various ways, and never knew it to fail. It was sufficient to give him a line of a classic or of a modern masterpiece—provided, of course, that he was acquainted with it—to have the rest of the page "reeled off" without a break. The sedate demeanour of M. Grévy evidently never imposed upon Paul de Musset, for he also told me that Grévy is not only very fond of women's society, but that he is a great favourite with them, and that he admirably understands their temper, disposition, and whims. He never hurries matters, least of all does he pose as a lady-killer (*en conquérant*) or broken-hearted victim of unrequited passion. He lays deliberate siege to their hearts or imaginations, he does not attempt to take them by storm, and in his own quiet way gives them to understand that even in the event of surrender they will be allowed to retire finally with the banners of their fair fame flying, and with the honours of war.'

As a sexagenarian, Jules Grévy had lost none of his charm with women; as a man he was entitled to the respect and admiration of all his fellow-men, whether they belonged to the republican party or not. He had a political record untainted by the faintest breath of suspicion. No reactionary could prefer against him a charge of having draped himself in the cast-off finery of the Irish Revolution for interested purposes, and of being ready to fling it aside should self-interest or merely political ambition prompt a change of costume. From the moment Grévy made his appearance in the political arena in 1848, nay, from the very moment he forced himself into notice as the legal defender of Philippet and Quignot, accused like Barbès and Martin Bernard of complicity in the insurrection of 1839, he fought with uplifted visor for the republican cause. There had not been a single political inconsistency in his public career from that date up to his appearance in the salon of Mme.

Pélouze, for even his alleged opposition to a president of the Republic was not an opposition to a chief of the state by election, but an opposition to the manner of electing him as proposed and carried in 1848. Grévy was not hostile to the idea of a president of the Republic, but to the idea of raising him to that position by a plebiscite. He did not argue the matter on Napoleonic grounds, viz. that the masses were incapable of deliberating, although he may not have had more faith in them in that respect than the two Bonapartes; he merely maintained that in the event of a conflict between the Chamber and a president elected by the popular vote, such a president could take his stand upon the fact of owing no allegiance to the Chamber, inasmuch as the Chamber had not elected him. Consequently, on the plea, whether well-founded or not, of acting in the interest of the nation herself, which chose him, he might oppose the Chamber to the bitter end, nay, dissolve it by force as an assembly of enemies to the public weal. A little more than three years afterwards his prevision was verified. I have given the spirit, not the letter of Grévy's contention, for I am writing around history, not history.

Unlike Busson, Floquet, Gambetta, and a dozen others whose names have become identified with the fortunes of the Third Republic, Jules Grévy, though well known for his republican opinions, did not make those opinions a stepping-stone to success in his profession. There was a kind of coquetry about Grévy's concealing his age. At a dinner-party, given by one of his friends in 1872, Grévy said with a smile, 'People may try as much as they like, they shall never really know how old I am.' And, in fact, when Hérold, the son of the composer of *Zampa*, and some time a minister of the Republic, endeavoured to obtain definite particulars about Grévy for a new edition of Vapereau, Grévy persistently refused to supply them. 'The archives of Mont-sous-Vaudrey were burnt in 1831,' he said; 'and you must do the best you can. You 'll get no information from me.' As a consequence, all Grévy's biographers gave the year 1813 as that of his birth, while in reality he was born six years earlier. An extract of the civil register of the commune of Mont-sous-Vaudrey, found somewhere about the late eighties at the civil tribunal of the Dôle, Department of the Jura, removed all uncertainty about the matter, and lent more consistency to the story of Grévy having been among the assailants of the barracks in the Rue de Babylone during the Revolution of 1830. He would have been twenty-three at that time instead of seventeen, as was at first supposed. Nevertheless, there is also an objection to that. At seventeen his youthful enthusiasm might have got the better of his bodily indolence and great craving for sleep, both of which throughout his long life always astonished those who knew him best; at twenty-three that bodily indolence had become too pronounced to yield to enthusiasm involving physical exertion, except on the chance of having a good day's sport. In his later life Grévy became fond of billiards, but it is well known that at first the game was resorted to on the stringent recommendation of a physician who saw no other way out of the

125

Jules Grévy

difficulty. In spite of all this, Grévy made his mark very soon after he was called to the Bar. The truly phenomenal memory to which I alluded stood him in excellent stead, and made him from the very outset a charming *causeur*, though he could never lay claim to the title of *orateur*, and, as far as I have heard, never did lay claim to it. He was never the *bon-vivant*; for the *bon-vivant*, according to the definition of him by Marivaux, rarely if ever springs from that class of the bourgeoisie to which Grévy belonged, and which is, above all, careful of its savings. In his earlier manhood he seems, however, to have been essentially *un bon garçon*, what we should call 'a good fellow,' though not exactly a jolly good fellow; for even at thirty he was very demure, not to say grave. His gravity had not saved him from a scrape which ended in an enforced *mésalliance*; it did not save him a second time from an entanglement, a subsequent side issue of which was the marriage of his daughter with Daniel Wilson, which marriage cost Jules Grévy his presidential chair. But for his son-in-law, Jules Grévy would have occupied that chair until the day of his death, and occupied it, if not with *grand éclat*, at least worthily, according to the latter-day French republican ideal, which is absolutely wingless in everything, and forces men with wings to hide them at the risk of having them mistaken for a hump. The hump is especially useful in a president of the Republic; it enables the legislators of France to use it as a desk whereon to write shady enactments and one-sided laws, just as the speculators of Law's time drew up fraudulent contracts on the spinal deformity of that legendary Æsop of the Rue Quincampoix, a glimpse of whom we got years ago in *Le Bossu*, otherwise '*The Duke's Motto*.' Æsop lent himself willingly to the arrangement; he chuckled and had his tongue in his cheek, but took the fees. Towards the end of his career Jules Grévy was not unlike him. To my great regret I shall have to show him in that aspect; but at the period with which I am immediately concerned, he had not in any way grown callous to the fancied or real prestige of republican institutions. It has been said that the political career of Jules Grévy was 'the triumph of an attitude.' In November 1870 the attitude was what it had hitherto been, that of a scholar and a man of the world, dignified yet unaffected, and not devoid of a *soupçon* of disgust at being identified with such a Republic as the nascent one bade fair to be. He had traversed the Second Empire amidst the respect of his political opponents whom he had respected, and against whom not an ill-chosen word had ever been uttered. 'It's their business to be imperialists, just as it is mine to be a republican,' he had virtually said. It was simply a paraphrase of Renan's sentence: 'I respect everybody, even Challemel-Lacour, as I respect my gout.' The imperialists—I am referring to the imperialists of note—whether the original or the rallied ones, had set the example in that respect. A few instances must suffice. On the 3rd November 1863 Thiers and many other avowed opponents of the Empire resumed their seats at the Palais-Bourbon. Morny, in his opening speech as President of the Chamber, alluded in graceful terms to the reappearance of some of his former parliamentary colleagues. 'I rejoice to see them once more, and have no doubt about the loyalty of their intentions,' he said. Just before the beginning of that session—in fact, at the end of the previous one, when there were only five instead of twenty-three avowed republicans in the Chamber—Picard, the Finance Minister of the 4th September, was down in the 'order of the day' for an important speech; and to his great vexation there was no admission ticket for Gambetta, who was marching up and down the Salle des Pas-Perdus like a raving lunatic. He was already beginning to be known, and his exclusion from the sitting would be looked upon by the republican youths of the Quartier Latin as having been brought about purposely, not by the majority but by the minority, who might be afraid that Gambetta's presence would compromise them too much. That is how nearly all republicans judged, and continue to judge, their representatives. Verily, Rivarol was right when he said, 'The masses give their favour, never their confidence.' Anyhow, Picard was in a difficulty, and did not know how to get out of it. In his emergency he applied to M. de Montjoyeux, who went to Morny to ask for a little corner for the young friend of the 'Five.' 'There is only room in my own box,' replied Morny; 'I'll find room for M. Gambetta there. I have heard much about him. I'll not be sorry to have a look at him.'

So said, so done. At the issue of the sitting Gambetta was returning to the Quartier Latin accompanied by some friends, and vehemently criticising the proceedings; they were passing along the Quai Voltaire, when suddenly he caught sight, on the opposite bank of the river, of the carriages of the Emperor and the Empress emerging from the Tuileries on their way to the Bois de Boulogne. The magnificent horses, the postilions in their gold and green, and the outriders, aroused his ire, and also perhaps his envy ; for Gambetta was no Spartan, and liked the good things of this world, including its fleshpots. He had the best cook in Paris the moment he could afford it, and with a singular exhibition of bad form which was, however, not singular in him, he raised his clenched fists and showered imprecations on the imperial couple across the river.

Grévy would not have done such a thing. He never insulted the Empire or the Emperor, and he never truckled to the other monarchical institutions or their representatives. Only once during his parliamentary career previous to the 4th September did he take part in an important debate, and on that occasion he dissociated himself from the majority of the Opposition. Under the ministry of Émile Ollivier a bill was brought in to rescind the laws of banishment against the d'Orléans family. This was the honeymoon of 'l'Union libérale,' and it was the fashion among the 'lefts' to make pilgrimages to Twickenham. Gambetta was among the pilgrims; the only time, I believe, he went to England ; his friend, Clément Laurier, of 'Morgan-loan' celebrity, presented him to the 'Princes of the Revolution,' as the sons and grandsons of Louis-Philippe were then called. Grévy never went to Twickenham, and he voted with the parliamentary light horse of the Empire against the measure.

He was as good a parliamentarian as he was a sportsman, and he knew the habits of the monarchical opponents of the Napoleonic régime as he knew the habits of the game and wild-fowl of his mountainous native country. If, with the complicity of others, the 'lefts' had carried the day, the Third Republic would probably have been still-born. Had the Ducs d'Aumale, de Nemours, and de Chartres, together with the Prince de Joinville, been permanently established in France immediately after Sedan, they would most likely have assumed the chief commands of what there was left of the armies of the Empire, and have signed a treaty of peace. There would have been another 'Lord Lieutenancy' of the country, as there was in 1830, to be followed shortly by the 'best of all republics,' as La Fayette hailed the citizen-monarchy.

Grévy and his familiars of the Hôtel de Bordeaux neither wanted a 'best of all republics' in that shape, nor a 'worst of all republics,' as it was being unfolded under their very eyes by Moss'ieu Gambetta and his cronies. It was not only heartrendingly incompetent in the execution of the task for which it was supposed to have come into existence, namely, the national defence, but it was absolutely powerless to check the epileptical tyranny of its creatures, all of whom were civilians. We shall have a glance at these directly; it will afford us an opportunity at this early stage for appreciating some who became shining lights afterwards, and whom Englishmen, ignorant of their antecedents, thought fit to take *au sérieux*. I am all the more anxious to do this, inasmuch as a section of those Englishmen never ceased to talk and to think of Louis Napoleon, even when he was at the height of his power, as a political adventurer. The position of an official 'devil's advocate' is not a pleasant one, but I am not that. Neither was that famous doctor of the Sorbonne, Jean de Launoy; but he dethroned many a spurious saint, and his contemporaries, even the clergy, liked him all the better for it. 'I am afraid of Launoy, lest he should take away my saint, who hangs but by a hair,' said the vicar of Saint-Eustache.

It will probably be remarked by those who for the last thirty years have posed as the professed admirers of Gambetta, and notably in England, that the majority of this gathering at the Hôtel de Bordeaux were only waiting to take Gambetta's place, and that their disgust was as unconvincing from a practical point of view as the applause on the other side. Against this is the testimony of a republican, absolutely above suspicion, who a few years later distinctly saved France from a second attack by Bismarck. I am alluding to General Le Flô, the military quaestor of the National Assembly on the day of the Coup d'État, whose name was struck off the Army List the moment the 2nd December had borne its fruit. He was one of the four generals whose career had been suspended by the advent of Louis Napoleon to the Imperial throne, and an irreconcilable republican besides; hence he had no reason for being inordinately fond either of the régime or of the man who represented it. The other three generals were Lamoricière, Bedeau, and

Changarnier. The former two died during the third Napoleon's reign. The latter offered his sword to the Emperor at Metz, which offer was declined, but he nevertheless remained in some undefined capacity, and was never absent from the post of danger. Le Flô, who was banished like the others, spent several years in England, but returned to France long before the outbreak of the war, at which moment he also asked to be allowed to defend his country. He met with a similar response to that of Changarnier, though not from Napoleon III. himself; and on the 6th September was appointed Minister of War at the repeated instances of General Trochu. It was only five days later that he was officially reinstated in his grade. Le Flô accepted the portfolio of war in spite of himself. It was offered to him late in the evening of the 3rd September by Comte de Kératry, who the next day became the Prefect of Police of the Government of the National Defence, and about whom I shall not write a word in these pages unless absolutely compelled. I may at a pinch admire men like Mirabeau, and even like Henri Rochefort, who profess to sever their connection with their ancestors by flinging to the wind the titles the latter have won for them either on the battlefield or in the Senate. They may consider such ornaments useless or burdensome in their crusade for the people and against the noblesse, although I have my distinct opinion on that subject. I fail to understand the man who petitions to have a title restored to him, and after having succeeded, hampers at every turn a government that granted his request, and then at the first opportunity sides with the scum.

To return to Le Flô, who declined the offer of M. de Kératry, which offer is but another proof that the republicans had laid their plans beforehand, irrespective of the possibility of seeing an honourable peace concluded by the regency of the Empress. Le Flô foresaw what would happen, and tried his utmost not to have anything to do either with the 'gentry' who made the 'men of the 4th September' the masters of France, or with the new masters themselves. The events of that memorable Sunday were not calculated to make him regret his decision. The following is the summary of the events from his point of view: 'By mere chance I happened to be in Paris and an eye-witness of the invasion of the Chamber *by that horde of scoundrels which came once more to the fore during the Commune. I am an avowed adversary of the Empire, but when I beheld that crowd of unkempt, bellowing, yelling wretches invade the Chamber and fill the galleries, I was overcome with a feeling of intense grief, and felt tempted to say to myself,* "*I prefer being taken back to Jersey into exile.*"' Le Flô, therefore, in accepting a few days later the portfolio of war, was not prompted by the feelings that swayed the majority of his colleagues. 'I only joined the Government,' he said, 'in my capacity as a soldier. I did not join it either as a republican of yore, or as a republican of the future, and I had no part nor parcel in the political measures that have been taken' (Deposition of M. le General Le Flô).

This avowed adversary of the Empire, this well-known and honest republican, who for the nonce almost denied his republicanism in sheer disgust of republicans like Gambetta, Crémieux, and Favre, continued to feel the same disgust for them later on, and rather than be accessory to any of their doings, voted with the Monarchists and Imperialists described as the reactionary party; although he did not leave a stone unturned to bring about the *rapprochement* between Russia and his country, which *rapprochement*, rightly or wrongly, he deemed essential as a safeguard of the latter against a renewed attack on the part of Germany.

Among the *habitués* of the gatherings of Mme. Pélouze at the Hôtel de Bordeaux there were a dozen men who could and would have fathered the declaration of Le Flô word for word, and one evening their smouldering discontent broke into a blaze, though not against Gambetta himself, who did not venture there, but against Glais-Bizoin, who was justly considered one of his principal abettors. To use a popular expression, M. Guyot-Montpayroux, a deputy in the last chamber of the Second Empire, 'went for him.' Glais-Bizoin was only too anxious to explain things, naturally from his point of view; but Daniel Wilson joined Bizoin's opponent, and overwhelmed him with reproaches. The trio of interlocutors was increased to a quartet, or perhaps to a quintet; and finally the din and excitement became too great for the hostess, who prudently retired, and was followed in her retreat by Bizoin himself. At ten o'clock the company was reduced to five, namely, MM. Cochery, Wilson, Deslandis, Montpayroux, and Jules Grévy, all of whom were at that time the uncompromising adherents of Adolphe Thiers.

The playwright who contends that in the most serious crises of life the comic element is sure to slip in independent of the will of the actors, and who constructs his pieces accordingly, is not far wrong. The situation in the drawing-room of the Hôtel de Bordeaux was weighty enough in all conscience, considering that the five men just named had come to the spontaneous and simultaneous determination to put an end to the dictatorship of Gambetta. The comic element, however, followed hard upon their tragic resolve. They began by bolting the door, of course, to guard against interruption. It was a sensible proceeding, if they had provided equally against eavesdropping by modulating their voices, which, as will be seen directly, they did not. One or two of the quintet constantly impressed the necessity for this upon the others, but without success, and thus it happened that their scheme, in its very inception, was revealed to those whom it threatened. Of this also, more in a few moments.

The first upshot of their confabulation was the unanimous agreement to get rid of Gambetta. Practically they said, ‘Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence into destruction cast him.’ But he was in the flesh at the Capitol, or at the Prefecture, which, under the circumstances, amounted to the same, and they did not know how to get him away from it, either to a real or metaphorical hill-top, whether near or distant. Which of the two powers was to accomplish the feat, the civil or the military? Crémieux was supposed to be at the head of the one, Fourichon at the head of the other. In reality there was not a constable or a soldier available to the one or to the other of these old men, if either or both had attempted to command their service for that or any other purpose. The whole of the improvised soldiery and such of the regulars as remained were, as far as the provinces went, at the bidding of Gambetta, not in virtue of their republicanism, but because they imagined that they alone stood between France and her further humiliation by the Germans. The only means of removing Gambetta was to let loose on him an isolated malcontent of great courage—in other words, a desperado who, either single-handed or with a few helpers, would arrest, and if resistance were shown, despatch him. There was a former captain of gendarmerie who fulfilled those conditions. He was a superannuated fire-eater of the Second Empire, and, like the majority of his fellows, nursed a grievance against the set of adventurers who had usurped power. He had known them in their impotently factious days, and would then have made short work of all or any. Ingrained contempt and pent-up hatred are capital grindstones for a legitimate or illegitimate sword, excellent muscle-makers for an arm about to strike. There was not the least doubt about this veteran having been sounded, of his having virtually accepted the task proposed to him, and of his having boasted that, with three or four resolute men, he could execute it. He could easily have found more than the required number among his fellow-malcontents, striding moodily day after day along the Mail. There was but one objection to the whole of the scheme. Short of killing him, the former captain of gendarmerie would have been at a loss to dispose of his prisoner, and among the plotters who wished to make him, the captain, their tool, there was not a Robespierre or a Saint-Just with sufficient grit to father such a step.

A conspiracy, whether widespread or limited in its scope, is like the statue of Galatea in the classic fable—it requires a Pygmalion to breathe life into it; and Pygmalion was wanting. The five plotters were aware of the fact. They, at any rate, imagined that the violent deposition of Gambetta could only be effected by one man—Adolphe Thiers. Truth compels one to state that this opinion prevailed even a few months later among the members of the Government of the National Defence when Gambetta had to be dealt with at Bordeaux.

In their emergency the five decided to go and knock at Thiers' door. They went stealthily upstairs, not so stealthily, though, as to escape observation, without which observation this incident in the beginnings of a Republic would never have found its way into these pages.

Twice before in his existence had it been Thiers' fate to be called upon to enact the hero when clad in nocturnal attire. Years before that evening *Le Charivari* had summed up Thiers' truly marvellous 'gift of the gab' in its first number, and in one short paragraph: 'The Minister of the Interior is no doubt the man who, in a stipulated time, can "spout" the greatest number of words, and squirt the largest number of verbal "bluebottles" upon the air. He is, moreover, the man who can talk for the longest period without taking the trouble to think. As a rule, one idea is all-sufficient for him—one idea and a tumbler of water with a lump of sugar in it. With these, M. Thiers will go on "prating" for twenty-four hours at a "stretch," like the skilful wire-drawer, who from an ounce of metal will produce twenty-four leagues of wire.'

The habit acquired in a lifetime, and in which he had become an adept, did not forsake Thiers at that critical moment. Having abbreviated the duty of listening, which was never much to his taste, by assuring his visitors of his complete agreement in all their objections to Gambetta, he nevertheless refused to join their plot for his forcible removal. He did not absolutely discountenance the aim itself of the plot, but he himself was 'an old man, very tired with his recent journeyings, and, moreover, mentally depressed with the cruel trials of his beloved country,' etc. etc. Besides, 'if they removed Gambetta, whom could they put in his place, pending even the few days necessary to the summoning of a National Assembly, the only measure Thiers could recommend as an alleviation to the evils the country was suffering.' To those who have not watched the whole of Thiers' career, it may appear odd that he who virtually told the deputies on the 4th September 'to go home' should now be so anxious to summon a fresh set. On the 4th September Thiers had not had the interviews with the various sovereigns and European statesmen which were to prepare the latter for the advent of Thiers as the president of a republic. On the 4th September the men who, twenty-four hours later, were to impose both their names and their doings on the whole of Europe as the 'Government of the National Defence,' had not given the proofs of their utter incapacity, their utter recklessness, their corruption and dishonesty, which two months later made them a byword with every serious, interested, and disinterested looker-on, inside as well as outside France. Thiers, clever and astute though he was, could not guess or know that Favre, Gambetta, Picard, and the rest would be so thoroughly below the task they had arrogated to themselves of inspiring the spectators of, as well as their opponents in, the struggle with respect, if not with admiration. If either of these things had resulted from Gambetta's dictatorship, Thiers, from sheer jealousy, would have retired either temporarily or permanently from the scene; for he no more than Guizot could brook a rival. When the nocturnal episode I have mentioned occurred, it was certain that there would be no such rival. That was why he recommended more strenuously than ever the summoning of a National Assembly, and was still content to bide his time.

For he had still to bide his time; the Bordeaux episode had yet to be played. It was so much like that at Tours that I need not describe it in detail as I have done the other. 'No elections, and war to the knife,' remained Gambetta's motto throughout. 'We may be obliged to bend beneath numbers, but we shall form anew and resume the campaign,' he telegraphed to Jules Favre after the heroic defeats in the north, the east, and on the Loire. He foresaw the surrender of Paris, for in that same despatch he said, 'Even if Paris should fall, France can and must continue this war,' etc. To impose the Republic on France is, after all, his only aim. 'I once more beseech you to proceed to the London Conference in order to have the Republic acknowledged as the rightful government.' How can Favre get to London, seeing that Paris has been closely invested since the 18th September? Nothing is easier, according to Gambetta. Like Carnot, he orders *une sortie torrentielle*, he commands the Parisians to be victorious, while he himself takes care to save his skin by preparing for another removal of the 'seat of the government'; which preparations inspire Ponson du Terrail with a parody, only the last act of which I have space to quote. Ten years are supposed to elapse since the beginning of the dictatorship. We are in 1880, and Henry v. (the Comte de Chambord) after a few years' reign has abdicated in favour of the Comte de Paris. France's wounds are healed; she has resumed her place among the nations, and almost forgotten her misfortunes. Thiers, whom du Terrail evidently intended to be a centenarian, Thiers, after having been raised to the marshalate of France in recognition of his military services, is at that moment Governor-General of the Invalides. Suddenly a balloon descends on the Esplanade des Invalides. It comes from the depths of unknown Africa, and brings to the editor-in-chief of the *Journal Officiel* a telegram from citizen Gambetta, whom in the previous act we left at Algiers. The message contains but a few words: 'War to the bitter end. Let us stand or die to the last man. I am preparing to move further up country.' Ponson du Terrail died a few days afterwards, a victim to the malignant fever and small-pox prevailing at Bordeaux.

The truth, as distinct from the parody, is that long before the fall of Paris, Gambetta and his satraps—by which I mean neither Crémieux, Glais - Bizoin, nor Fourichon—had abandoned the capital to her fate. Five weeks previously Gambetta had been told in a despatch by balloon that resistance had become hopeless. His answer was, 'Hold out for another week, and I 'll be responsible for everything.' His responsibility consisted in giving the invaders more and more scope, and allowing his creatures to batten and fatten upon the sorely tried population.

When the news reached Bordeaux of the surrender of Paris, of the signing of an armistice, and the summoning of an Assembly, Gambetta flung off even the transparent mask he had worn hitherto, and openly raised the standard of revolt, trusting, for personal safety especially, to his praetorian guard, viz. the delegates of the demagogic clubs and committees of Limoges, Toulouse, Lyons, and Marseilles, whom he had ordered to Bordeaux immediately after his arrival there. Every one of these—and there were several hundreds—was paid, and well paid, by the Minister-delegate of the Interior (still Gambetta). Gambetta's cry was just the same to the last, 'No elections; war to the bitter end.' This time, though, the provinces, instead of being told to go to the rescue of the capital, were told to wait for the Parisians, who, now that they were free, would come to their aid. Twenty-four hours later the elections were reluctantly conceded, but hedged round by so many restrictions as to constitute virtually the ostracism of three-fourths, if not nine-tenths, of the men of note in France. An Assembly elected under such circumstances would have been a mere farce, nay, an insult to the nation; a graver insult than the Germans had inflicted or could inflict upon her. The other contention was that Paris alone, and not France, had concluded an armistice.

For forty-eight hours after Jules Simon's arrival in Bordeaux with unlimited powers, it seemed as if civil war would be the next episode. It was only deferred. Thiers sat trembling in his shoes; and on the night of the 2nd - 3rd February had himself surrounded by a bodyguard, an improvised one, commanded by M. Saubot - Dambergez, a captain of the Mobiles of the Basses-Pyrénées. Jules Simon, though not frightened, foresaw a like arrest. For one night he slept away from Bordeaux. Not one, but a dozen prominent men were, in fact, arrested by order of Gambetta. The papers that printed M. Jules Simon's 'orders' were seized; the *Moniteur Officiel*, of which Gambetta was the master, refused to print them. The new delegate had not even sufficient money to stamp a number of circulars that were despatched to a great many provincial mayors to protest against these arbitrary proceedings, with the request to have the protest published in their papers. The envelopes bore the names of several leading firms in

Bordeaux; ostensibly, they were business announcements. Gambetta's postal officials, had they suspected the real nature of the contents of those wrappers, would have intercepted them.

Things remained pretty well the same until Monday morning, the 6th February. Then the *dénouement* came suddenly. Having become practically convinced of Gambetta's rebellion, M. Jules Simon, on the Friday morning, despatched M. Liouville, who had come to Bordeaux with him, to Paris for reinforcements. M. Liouville, if I mistake not, was an eminent barrister, and a candidate for Parliament in 1857, when the first five opposition members were elected. On his side, Gambetta despatched Crémieux on the Sunday morning. Jules Simon's envoy had, therefore, the start of Gambetta's by forty-eight hours, and the train which took Crémieux to Paris entered the station at Vierzon just as the train from Paris taking Liouville back to Bordeaux steamed in at the opposite side. M. Liouville was accompanied by MM. Garnier-Pagès, Eugène Pelletan, and Emmanuel Arago—not to be confounded with his uncle Stephen, who had resigned his connection with the Government of the National Defence three months before. M. Liouville's companions persuaded Crémieux, of whom they providentially caught sight, to return with them, and these five reached Bordeaux at 7 A.M. on the said Monday.

Jules Simon, accompanied by his three colleagues, immediately proceeded to Gambetta's, and whether from sheer surprise, or because he saw that the game was up, the dictator gave in and tendered his resignation there and then. Thiers had kept coy all the while; he had his reward; the wild beast had not devoured Gambetta, but the authorities—such authorities—had suppressed the performances, considering them too dangerous to the nation at large, and also because they interfered with their own projected entertainments.

In his book, *Souvenirs du Quatre Septembre, le Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale*, M. Simon scarcely breathes a word of all this. When it was published Gambetta was a power, and perhaps it was wise on M. Simon's part not to besmirch his own nest.

VII

THE PROVINCIAL TOWNS AND THE FOURTH OF SEPTEMBER

While Gambetta and Freycinet were browbeating and hectoring generals, Crémieux was disorganising the French judiciary — and, odd to relate, resowing the seeds of anti-Semitism which Napoleon III. had with much trouble prevented from sprouting luxuriantly during nearly the whole of his reign. In fact, anti-Semitism, or for the matter of that religious intolerance, is by no means a new thing in nineteenth-century France. Jew-baiting and Jew-hatred under a republican régime owed their revival to two Jews—Gambetta was as distinctly a Jew as Crémieux—both professed republicans.

Gambetta and Freycinet, then, were destroying the little prestige there was left to the French generals in the eyes of the nation by treating the former like so many errand-boys and porters. Crémieux at the same time was upsetting all the civil institutions of the country, and Glais-Bizoin was disorganising indiscriminately both military and civil precedents wherever and whenever he had an opportunity. The burlesque prefects whom these men of the 4th September had despatched in hot haste to the provinces were outstripping their mushroom chiefs by initiating a condition of topsy-turvydom, compared with which the fantastic legislation, forming the basis of some of Halévy and Meilhac's, and of Mr. Gilbert's comic operas, was simply Solon's statute-book. Many of these men were self-styled victims of the Coup d'État of 1851; they had been banished for a while, though, as in the case of Thiers and Victor Hugo, they had been practically invited to return to France, Napoleon III. being so little afraid of them at the time as to deem them less dangerous to his prestige and that of the revived Empire inside the country than out of it. He never openly explained the reason of his apparent leniency. He was not equally reticent to his intimate friends. 'A beau mentir qui vient de loin,' he said, 'and their tales of suffering and of my tyranny are much more likely to find credence at a distance than at home, where people can judge for themselves.'[1] For eighteen years these men had been prating either in the guise of writers or of professors about Caesarism and oppression. Alphonse Esquiros, taking refuge in England, never ceased to hold up our institutions, political and social, to the admiration of his countrymen. Let us see how he profited by the lessons he wished to convey.

When the 4th September dawned M. Esquiros represented Marseilles in the Corps Législatif of the Second Empire. The close of that day saw him on his way as proconsûl to the city he had represented in the parliament which was so unceremoniously dismissed by a couple of fifth-rate Cromwells—minus the valiance of the original one. M. Esquiros was bent upon making a triumphal entry into the Hellenic city, and left nothing to chance or to the spontaneous enthusiasm of its inhabitants. In fact, all the men of the 4th September, from the ringleaders in their hastily purchased furs to the hangers-on in their clothes hastily redeemed from the pawnshop, were aware of one thing. They knew that the republican régime—whether spurious or real—would arouse nothing but disgust and suspicion not only among the educated aristocracy and bourgeoisie, but among the sober-minded, though less-tutored, yeomanry and honest wage-earning classes. This is not a mere assertion of mine: I shall prove it directly by some of Gambetta's despatches. The big drum, therefore, was as necessary to them and their emissaries as it is to the tooth-drawer in the market-place to drown the cries of his victims. These men were never tired of railing at the 'enthousiasme de commande,' as they called it, of Napoleon III.'s journeys through the country. I do not say there was no organised applause. France borrowed her prefects and her theatrical claque from the Romans, and the two institutions in their modern guise are not altogether unconnected. But the constant revilers of everything pertaining to Caesarism professed their ability to do better, and the very first thing they borrowed from that despised rule was the 'cheering to order' they had condemned. Since then they have done nothing but borrow and plagiarise, spoiling whatever they borrowed and whatever they plagiarised.

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[1] The sentence has its English equivalent in connection with the word 'Cataian' as used by Shakespeare to denote a liar. It means that a man coming from afar may tell any number of cock-and-bull stories with impunity. It is borrowed from a kind of fairy play, *Nicodème dans la Lune*, dating from the First Revolution, and has passed into the French language as a proverb.

Hence, while the train conveying Esquiros was speeding along, Marseilles was informed of the honour awaiting it, and Marseilles proved equal to the occasion. It illuminated and decorated its streets, and turned the whole of its tagrag and bobtail into them. The National Guards lined the route to the station, where, long before M. Esquiros' arrival, a magnificent open carriage was held in readiness to take him to the Prefecture. The procession was like a triumphal entry, although there was nothing in M. Esquiros' past political career to justify it. He was like many of his fellow-republicans—Louis Blanc, Eugène Pelletan, and Clément Caraguel—an able writer, though it is doubtful whether one per cent. of those who gave him this welcome had ever read a line of what he had written. Conspicuous among the reception committee there was a youngish-looking man of about thirty, with a handsome black beard, and wearing spectacles. He was a clerk in a Greek banking-house of Marseilles, and a shining light of the advanced republican party. He took his seat by the side of the new prefect, and gave the signal for the cheering by waving his hands and even throwing kisses to the women leaning out of the windows. This was M. Maurice Rouvier, the future Finance Minister of the Third Republic. He had his reward there and then: M. Esquiros made him secretary-general of the Prefecture of the Bouches-du-Rhône. He subsequently went as a delegate of Marseilles to Gambetta at Tours. Gambetta owed him a good turn for having contributed to the success of his parliamentary candidature in 1869 when he contested Marseilles against Ferdinand de Lesseps and Thiers. But—to anticipate for a moment—though Marseilles elected Gambetta when there was no sign of such a republic as he foreshadowed, they rejected the man who had helped him and to whom they had listened, when in 1871 they feared that such a republic might become an accomplished fact. I cannot accumulate too many proofs in support of my contention that France, neither during the Second Empire nor afterwards, wanted a republic, and that the election of republican candidates was the work of the rabble, which in times of prosperity she allowed to shout and to bellow, thinking it would never come to more than that.

To return to M. Esquiros, who took possession of his prefecture as the anointed of the rabble calling themselves *les civiques*. Practically, he had no will of his own, and the honest and decent thing would have been either to make a stand against them or to resign his new functions. Long before 1870, however, the arch-agitator, Ledru-Rollin, had enunciated the mode of procedure to be adopted under such circumstances. 'I am their leader,' he said, 'hence I must follow them whither they lead.' There was, moreover, the stipend and the perquisites attached to the post. In spite of my constant preoccupation not to explain the action of all these men by the most sordid of motives, I cannot get away from the fact that the majority of them were the reverse of prosperous at the fall of the Second Empire. The 'Panama Scandal' was only the visible festering of a seething corruption with which, a few excepted, all were more or less tainted. Personally, Esquiros was probably content with the considerable appointments suddenly placed within his grasp. It is, nevertheless, a fact, that immediately after his arrival the diamonds of his predecessor's wife, Mme. Levert, disappeared from a private room of M. Esquiros' official residence. Not the slightest trouble was taken to discover, let alone to punish, the thief. M. Esquiros no more dared move in such a matter than he dared to prevent the arrest of the Vicomte de la Guéronnière—Napoleon III.'s ambassador to Constantinople—as he landed from the mail-packet at Marseilles.

I have equally no doubt that M. Esquiros did not wish the religious associations suppressed, and that, as far as he was concerned, he would have left reactionary papers like the *Gazette du Midi* unmolested. For all that, he suppressed the religious sisterhoods, and suspended the newspaper, after its offices had been partly wrecked by those who had cheered him so vociferously on his arrival. The total destruction of the place was prevented by Rouvier, who, as Rivarol said of the eighteenth-century revolutionaries, 'chose to assume the rôle of fireman, after having commenced as an incendiary.' Rochefort was and is fond of playing that part. The order, both with regard to the religious establishments and the journal, was rescinded by the Delegation at Tours, and thereupon the proconsul at

Marseilles pretended to tender his resignation; but the *civiques* demanded the maintenance in office of their chief. A local poet, named Carcassone, even went so far as to repair at the head of the *civiques* to the Marseilles Town Hall and, pending the reply from Tours, to proclaim the Commune. The measure was virtually countenanced by M. Esquiros, who on that occasion made a speech, only a part of which I can reproduce here; the rest of it and many other matters relating to the beginnings of the Third Republic are fully set forth in the reports of the 'Commission of Inquiry into the events of the 4th September.'

'Citizens,' said M. Esquiros, 'you know the difference between the central power of Tours and the powers that have been confided to me; if the administration of Tours abandons me, I feel certain that Marseilles will not desert me. In a week from hence the National Guards shall be mobilised and we'll begin our march. I shall put myself at your head, and we'll go from village to village to preach this holy war and, if necessary, to die in order to save France and solidly to establish the Republic.' The address was followed by the inevitable 'Marseillaise,' and by a second though somewhat more terse allocution from a patriot who climbed a ladder in order to dominate the crowd. 'You have heard what our patriarch said,' he yelled. 'Never were words spoken to a better purpose. Let us confer the name of Esquiros on the street that opens in front of us.' And forthwith the Rue St. Ferréol was transformed in accordance with the suggestion. M. Esquiros himself had set the example of those transformations. Within forty-eight hours of his arrival he had changed the appellation of the Cours Belzunce, and called into existence the Place Danton, the Rue Victor-Noir, and the Rue Agenars. Victor Noir was the man who was shot dead by Prince Pierre Bonaparte in his own house, and who, in spite of everything that was said, was not a martyr to the Republic, although the murder did not make less of a ruffian of the Emperor's cousin. Agenars was a kind of fifth-rate Maurice Rouvier, who had been transported after the Coup d'État of the 2nd December. Napoleon III. and his prefect Haussmann also christened and rechristened thoroughfares and streets, but in default of new names like Sebastopol, Magenta, and Solferino, they fell back upon old ones like Prince Eugène, Malesherbes, and Villiers. They did not borrow those of obscure agitators and self-advertising journalists who possessed not the smallest claim to the slightest mention in the history of France. As a matter of course, patriotism like that of M. Esquiros, which, after all, was that of Gambetta and Favre, plus a separatist aim, must necessarily rely for its propagation on redundant sentences. It comes under the category of Bishop Jewell's 'empty pig which makes the greatest noise.' Esquiros was a better educated man than either Favre or Gambetta; he had an instinctive perception of the folly of borrowed rhetoric. He preferred to stir the demagogic broth with periods of his own invention, which, however, in their vaingloriousness and in their pandering to the overweening assumption of that demagogy, differed in no way from the others. Here is what appeared on the walls of Marseilles on the 27th September 1870: 'We have taken the oath in the name of the brave Marseillais, in the name of the National Guards, who in their martial attitude marched past us yesterday under the standard of the Republic, in the name of our fathers of '89, that the soil of Provence shall never be defiled by the presence of the Prussians.' And elsewhere he laid down the bases of the foreign policy imposed upon the Republic as it was understood and carried out at Marseilles: 'We do not ask for allies among the powers; besides, we have one—eternal justice.'

The effect of all this on the group at the Hôtel de Bordeaux at Tours may be gauged by the effect it produced on the group at the Prefecture, for even Spuller, and Freycinet, and Laurier, and Steenackers, not to mention Crémieux, Glais-Bizoin, and Gambetta, had not foreseen this attempt to establish an *imperium in imperio*; at any rate, not from such a mild-mannered individual as Esquiros, who was, besides, one of their own. As for Gambetta, he stood as much astounded as that Duke of Calabria to whom they signalised the presence of a robber in his dominions. 'I'll have no robber here but myself,' he said. 'Let him be caught and done with.' Of course, such a summary proceeding would have commended itself to Gambetta if he had had the daring, the grandeur, and the lawlessness of the usurper; but he had scarcely the lawlessness, for upon his most arbitrary acts he endeavoured to put a complexion of legality. He would not, like Napoleon I., have dared to entrap a Duc d'Enghien and have had him shot in order to throw terror into the minds of his enemies. I have read a good deal about that supposed crime of Napoleon; I have come to the conclusion that from his point of view he was absolutely right. The Bourbons would not have scrupled to kill him. Benito Juarez was perfectly correct in executing Maximilian of Austria. *À la guerre, comme à la guerre*—the usurper, if he be worthy of the name, demands no quarter and gives none.

It is, moreover, doubtful whether Gambetta would have found any one among his immediate entourage with sufficient pluck to beard M. Esquiros amidst his Marseillais; so he was perforce obliged to let him remain. M. Esquiros, in the concrete, is of no importance whatever to these pages; but he represented the spirit of that anarchy which prevailed everywhere, for Marseilles was not an exception. Yet, but for his death shortly afterwards, we should have met with him in the guise of one of those bigwigs of the Third Republic, for whom in after-years Londoners spread banqueting-tables at the Mansion House and organised fireworks at the Crystal Palace, whose speeches were reported by journalists, ignorant of their antecedents, as the weighty utterances of experienced statesmen, while in reality they were as much entitled to notice as the addresses of the gentry who on Sunday afternoons stand spouting in Hyde Park.

I am not exaggerating. The fuss that was made in the early eighties by the London press—as distinct from society and Downing Street — over Challemel-Lacour would have been misplaced if he had had the talent, the prestige, and the rectitude of Guizot, whom Louis Philippe sent to England as an ambassador, and who, like Challemel-Lacour, had been a schoolmaster; for the professor of this, that, or the other branch of science, history, or literature in a French college is, in spite of the high-sounding title, no more than a schoolmaster. The London Press, at that time much more insufficiently informed on foreign affairs than at present, had heard that Challemel-Lacour was sent especially as a representative of the bourgeoisie which Grévy was supposed to represent at the Elysée, and they accordingly made much of him.

At present I will look at Challemel-Lacour as a prefect, as an administrator, and as a so-called representative of the bourgeoisie whence he sprang. I will try to dissect him as a champion of that liberty of which he had never been tired of prating for eighteen years, and as an adversary of that Napoleonic tyranny which he had denounced for an equal period.

About twenty-four hours after Esquiros' departure for Marseilles, Challemel-Lacour was despatched to Lyons, where the Republic was proclaimed at least twenty-odd hours before it was proclaimed in the capital. This would mean, and in fact does mean, that the disaster of Sedan was known in the second city of France before it was known in the first. By whom had Lyons been informed, seeing that the Ministerial despatch, but in cipher, advising all the prefects, had only been sent from Paris on Saturday, the 3rd September, at 6.40 P.M. According to M. de Kératry, the Prefect of Police of the

Government of the National Defence, and an Orléanist in the skin of a republican, a telegram from Brussels informed the members of the Opposition at 10 A.M. on that Saturday of what was not known to the Government until several hours later. M. de Kératry ought to have been well informed, for he belonged to the Opposition. According to another account, the news came to Lyons by way of Geneva, and this is all the more likely, inasmuch as Geneva was swarming at the time with members of 'l'Internationale,' some of whose emissaries were watching at Sedan and elsewhere. Cluseret was among the number. He confessed as much in a St. Etienne paper in November 1870: 'I was three days at Sedan. Immediately after the Emperor's surrender I made my way as quickly as possible into the interior of France.' In what capacity was Cluseret at Sedan? Assuredly not as a soldier fighting with the French colours. Assuredly not as a soldier fighting under the German standards, for it is more than certain that the Germans would have had none of him. Be this as it may, Lyons knew all about the catastrophe early on the Saturday, and forthwith began its preparations for overthrowing the existing régime.

The deliberations lasted throughout the night of the 3rd-4th September, and at 9 A.M. on Sunday the red flag floated from the roof of the Hôtel-de-Ville, the Republic was proclaimed, a 'Comité de Salut Public' instituted,[1] the prison doors were thrown open to several unspeakable miscreants, and, as a matter of course, to those confined for political offences. M. Andrieux, a barrister, with whom we shall meet again, and whom M. Crémieux, a little while after, appointed Procurator of the Republic, was among the latter. The cells were, however, not left empty: they were filled with the Prefect of the Rhône himself and many other magistrates. For once in a way the second city of France did not wait for a signal from the first, for it ought to be borne in mind that the movement was begun before France was informed of its terrible reverse, although at Lille and on the Belgian frontier the report of it had spread on the evening of the 3rd, previous to the reception of the official despatch.

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[1] I have not attempted to translate the words 'Comité de Salut Public.' I prefer giving its definition according to Larousse, who in all things revolutionary may be trusted to contort the words in the sense most

There was not at Lyons, as in Paris, a scramble for places. It is a notorious fact, which transpired almost immediately afterwards, that all the members of the 'Comité de Salut Public' had been designated beforehand. In addition to well-known Communists, such as Doublé, Chanoz, Palix, and Tacussel, there were, in the first place, M. Andrieux, already named, and Narambon, another barrister, who was also to have his reward at the hands of M. Crémieux by being named Procurator-General at Besançon. There was, moreover, Dr. Hénon, a radical deputy during the Second Republic. In short, the Internationale shared its triumph both with the radical

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favourable to the revolutionists: 'The Comité de Salut Public, created by the Convention on April 1793 to concentrate the executive power, and celebrated for its revolutionary violence. It was suppressed at the advent of the Directory.' The Lyons Committee was an imitation of it.

school of Jules Simon, Gambetta, and Ferry, and with the collectivist disciples of Bakunin and Albert Richard.

However much infatuated with themselves and their achievements, the new masters of Lyons were well aware that there is only one city in France capable of making and unmaking dynasties, and of dictating to the whole of France in the matter of revolutions. An uprising unsupported by the capital has never been successful in modern times. It meant, moreover, terrible reprisals in the event of the Imperial dynasty being able to weather the storm of patriotic indignation at the fall of Sedan; and notwithstanding the intelligence kept up with the leaders of 'l'Internationale,' the Lyons desperadoes were not at all certain of the Regency not being able to hold its own. I fancy I have shown conclusively that two devoted regiments, or even one, might have changed the complexion of things inside the Palais-Bourbon on the 4th September. However low an estimate of humanity in general those desperadoes might entertain, they could not well conceive that among the many soldiers Napoleon III. had befriended, there would not be one ready to risk his life for Napoleon's son, if not for him, by leading such a regiment on to the scum that determined the republican usurpation. Yet that soldier did not appear, and it was probably with a feeling of relief that the Lyons scum heard quasi-officially of the success of the Paris scum about 8 P.M. on that Sunday night. That success consolidated their own. The answer to that telegram was despatched immediately. It read as follows:

'Lyons peaceful; perfect order prevails; the Comité de Salut Public still awaits the communications of the Government of Paris.'

Radicals and Communists practically held the same language, for in a supplementary despatch from Paris, immediately following the first, and setting forth the constitution of the new Cabinet, Glais-Bizoin had said, 'Paris is up and doing; the new government acclaimed everywhere; not the slightest disorder anywhere.'

As far as Paris went, this was practically true; let us see how true it was with regard to Lyons. After having liberated M. Andrieux and some of his clients, 'les nouvelles couches,' as the French fondly term the democracy, under the guidance of a member of the Comité de Salut Public, named Beauvoir, pillaged and wholly wrecked the seminary of St. Irénée. Then they turned their attention to the forts, whence they took the firearms. Concurrently with this, there was open war between the commissaries of police and their agents on the one side, and the self-styled partisans of 'perfect order,' according to the telegram, on the other, a plenary amnesty of all quasi-political prisoners having been pronounced. This was hardly necessary, inasmuch as all bolts, bars, and locks had indiscriminately flown asunder, though only for a little while, the same bolts, bars, and locks being put into requisition for the safe and arbitrary sequestration of any and every one suspected of not being favourable to the new régime. By midday on the 5th at least a dozen and a half of the liberated prisoners—among whom there were a couple of habitual criminals—had been invested with public functions; several families, terror-stricken, had taken flight; and an open conflict had broken out between the military governor, General Espivent de Villeboisnet, and the Comité de Salut Public.

About the same time the new government of Lyons received a telegram from Gambetta, in answer to that addressed to him the previous evening: 'The Government sends its hearty congratulations to the city of Lyons; citizen Challemel-Lacour has been appointed Prefect of the Rhône; he is starting; if it be not already done, release the former prefect.' This is the document verbatim.

Thus far the stage on which Challemel-Lacour made his début as an active republican, administrator, future legislator, Minister of Foreign Affairs, ambassador, and, finally, President of the Senate. The stage itself, with its secondary actors, supernumeraries, all bawling their loudest about 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,' differs but little from a score of others I could have sketched. For reasons already stated, I have preferred that one; throughout it must not be forgotten that Challemel-Lacour became one of the shining lights of the Third Republic.

His first appearance, even according to his own account, was the reverse of brilliant. Unlike Esquiros' progress towards his destination, Challemel-Lacour's was not enhanced by orations at the intermediate stations; and not having a Maurice Rouvier to work the oracle for him, his reception at his proconsulate was of the flattest.

It savoured more of a fiasco than of a triumph. 'The Hôtel-de-Ville was full of armed men, and I had great difficulty in getting inside,' he deposed subsequently. 'Those in the courtyard received me with jeers, and their leaders immediately took hold of me (*s'empara de ma personne*).' The euphemism notwithstanding, it meant that Challemel-Lacour, the envoy of Gambetta and of the Government of the National Defence, was practically a prisoner. He had, nevertheless, an opportunity for surveying his surroundings, and to his utter astonishment found himself, when once in the big Council-room, in the presence of a hundred people where he only expected to find a few. 'The individual who presided at their deliberations asked me in virtue of what right I had come to Lyons. I answered him that I was the prefect sent by the Minister of the Interior, established in Paris, in consequence of the necessity for replacing the authorities which had ceased to exist. The reply did not appear satisfactory to him. The result was a long conversation, carried on politely but very firmly on the part of the president — a conversation frequently interrupted by others. I was treated to the views of the Lyons democracy, and even of the democracy of the South, on the situation. They had made up their minds to govern themselves, etc. etc. Another set of interlocutors asked me to state my opinions with regard to the relations to be established between the "Central Government" and the "Local Government,"[1] as the administration of the city of Lyons was termed by them. One of those interruptions was in connection with something I said about the war and about the urgency of providing for the defence of Lyons, which was seriously threatened. At the end of that big hall there were two individuals seated on a stove. One of these exclaimed, "The Prussians, that's the least of our concerns." The words were heard all over the place; they did not provoke a single cry of protest. I protested vehemently against that way of viewing matters, and was unanimously applauded; at any rate, if there were any dissentient voices, I failed to hear them. If, at that moment, there were any members inspired by the ideas attributed to "l'Internationale," they constituted a small minority.'

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[1] M. Challemel-Lacour wisely refrained from quoting his reply to those questions. Unfortunately for his subsequent reputation as a stern

I need not go on quoting the depositions of M. Challemel-Lacour, which, perhaps, contained nothing but the truth, but assuredly did not contain the whole truth.

There is, however, another document, as worthy of credit—provided either of them is—as M. Challemel-Lacour's deposition, namely, Louis Garel's pamphlet already mentioned; and from this it appears that the

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moralist and disciplinarian, those answers were embodied in a pamphlet, *La Révolution Lyonnaise*, by Louis Garel, the secretary of the Comité de Salut Public. According to him, M. Challemel-Lacour declared that in no way would he interfere with the acts of the Commune of Lyons, and that he meant throughout to respect the municipal privileges. His opinions on that subject were so decided and his principles so irrevocable that in the event of the Central Government enjoining him to act in a contrary sense, rather than acquiesce, he should resign. This was tantamount to declaring the independence of the Commune, *i.e.* the existence of a state within the State; and the Commune of Paris becomes perfectly logical.

new would-be proconsul was not only treated with the utmost contumely, and the so-called Government that had sent him held up to ridicule and scorn, but that he, the envoy of it, stood all the insult tamely and pandered to the worst demagogic passions for no other reason, as I take it, than to consolidate, or at any rate to maintain, his very slippery position. When he was not being sequestrated for twenty-four hours, he sequestrated others in obedience to his sequestrators.

VIII

REPUBLICAN AND IMPERIAL METHODS

Napoleon iii. is often stigmatised as a political adventurer. I venture to say that, adventurer for adventurer, the son of Hortense de Beauharnais was more worthy of respect than any of those with whom I shall be directly concerned.

I may as well state the aim of this paper plainly at the outset. It is to dissuade Englishmen in general, but their statesmen in particular, from taking the Third Republic *au sérieux*. Before I have written the word 'finis,' I shall be able to prove that my advice is not based on 'the systematic hostility' to the founders of that régime and their continuators with which I have so often been twitted. The Second Empire was four years old when I came to Paris, which I did not leave for any length of time until the Empire fell. I owe the Empire nothing, though while it lasted I might have had any position, befitting my age and my capacities, for the asking. The relatives who brought me up were personal friends of the Emperor, to whose father and mother they stood in similar relations. Napoleon iii., like his immortal uncle, was gratitude personified. Neither my relations nor I ever asked for anything. We were content to remain in our obscurity. The Second Empire was a personal régime, and as such the person representing it, and no one else, has to be dealt with here. Well, as a statesman and as a diplomatist, Louis Napoleon stood a head and shoulders higher than any man of the Third Republic, perhaps Thiers excepted. If in the latter capacity he was finally no match for Bismarck, it was because he was hand-bound by his parliament, while the other was able to override the decisions of the Prussian legislature. I am merely giving the outlines of a sketch which the reader will be enabled to fill in for himself.

As a man, *i.e.* in his private attitude towards the meanest of his subjects, he was the most generous and largest-minded creature the world ever knew. His unostentatious charity was unbounded. The enormous civil list he enjoyed for nearly eighteen years left a positively ridiculous residue behind when the end came; for that list was never supplemented by stock-exchange operations the foregone conclusion of which was secured by early knowledge of events—not to say by his own power of shaping them, at any rate for sufficiently long to reap the fruit of such combinations. I could prove that not only Talleyrand and Louis Philippe did this; but that absolutely every man of the Third Republic, with the exception of five, whose names I must for obvious reasons omit, owe the large fortunes they have amassed to those methods. Of course, there were scandals under the Second Empire, but there were no scandals involving a couple of hundred deputies like the

Panama affair; and the conviction of a minister for malpractices had its precedent—not under the Second Empire, but under the reign of Louis Philippe—in the Cubières and Teste trial. 'Napoleon III. hushed such scandals up,' says the careful observer. Perhaps, if he did, it was with his own money, and it would have been well perhaps if Louis Philippe, and afterwards the fellow-ministers of Baïhaut, had done the same. Such generosity did not constitute an item of their private code of morals. Their motto has ever been, 'Every one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.'

To conclude this particular comparison between the Second Empire and the Third Republic. It would be sheer folly to pretend that there was no poverty in France under the first-named régime. But from various causes the attitude of 'Fortune's favourites' towards the indigent was different from what it is and has been during the last thirty years. The self-sufficient, pompous, quasi-virtuous big-wig of the Third Republic flatters himself that he owes his position to his talents, energy, and perseverance. Though he can be lavish at times, he is rarely generous; he contents himself with being just—according to his own lights. In the majority of cases he has never had the handling of large sums of money until he wheedled himself, or was pitchforked, into parliament, diplomacy, or office, and what is worse for the poor, he knows his position to be insecure—there being so many clamouring or intriguing for his place. His ethics, therefore, compel him to make hay while the sun shines. A change of ministry may at any moment relegate him to a very chilly corner, and a change of ministry is the only certainty that can enter into his calculations. In order to preserve some semblance of a chronological method, I must also reserve this proof of what I state for another opportunity. It is doubtful if the big-wig of the Second Empire ever entertained such fears of relapsing into obscurity and straitened means. I will leave Thiers out of the question for a little while. My memory is pretty good; yet, among the pseudo-founders of the Third Republic, it fails to recall more than three or four men possessed of anything like 'means' at their advent to power. Jules Favre made a large income from his practice, Crémieux and Glais-Bizoin were reputedly well-to-do. The rest, with the exception of Jules Simon, had not made any mark in their respective professions: even Gambetta's highly successful and sensational defence of Delescluze did not bring him a practice as a lawyer, and but for his contributions to journalism, especially foreign journalism, for he was not a 'high-flyer' at either grammar or syntax, and his stipend as a deputy at the end of the Second Empire, he would not have been enabled to live. His grammatical and synthetical blunders disappeared in translation. Of course, I am not including Admiral Fourichon or General Le Flô in this statement. They were neither rich nor poor, and in addition to some small private fortunes which came to most middle-class Frenchmen in the course of time, had for many years enjoyed their pay respectively as a sailor and a soldier. Fourichon accepted a position he had not sought; Le Flô was practically destined to form part of any revolutionary combination in virtue of his having been a victim of Louis Napoleon on the morning of the 2nd December 1851, when he was a quaestor of the swept-away Chamber of Deputies. Among all the notabilities of the Third Republic, Jules Simon was the only one who ended as he had begun, namely by being poor. The Second Empire was, perhaps, not an absolute model of purity, but it did not intrust the national till to 'little tradesmen and clerks,' sprung from nowhere.

I need not pursue this comparison further; I can only repeat, the big-wig of the Second Empire had no fear of relapsing into obscurity and straitened means. As a rule he was chosen by Napoleon III. either for his ascertained capacities or for his social standing, sometimes for both. But whether talented or not, he was less impressed with his own 'high mightiness' than the republican. When for some reason or other he was dismissed from his post, he could not, in ordinary cases, go on intriguing and caballing in the Legislature against his successor, and thus make the latter's life a burden to him; nor, except in isolated instances, did he, for his doing so would only have brought down upon him the wrath of the Emperor, and his chances of reinstatement would have gone for ever. And those who were secure in their places, some of whom I have known, were almost inclined to laugh in their sleeves at the idea of a providential mission on their parts, like the republicans, or of a providential mission on the part of Queen Hortense's son, and of their instrumentality in furthering it. Not a few grinned behind the backs of the worshippers at the Napoleonic shrine, but until a short time before the collapse, all had great faith in the cleverness of the high priest. The latter believing, like his famous uncle, in his 'star,'[1] and that it would never set, gave freely, without stint, almost too lavishly and certainly too indiscriminately, and the majority of his Court followed suit in this, as in every other respect.

I fancy I have refuted the charge of systematic hostility to the men and things of the Third Republic; but if not, the reviewers must go on making it. I can simply assure the reader that I hold no brief for any of the representatives of the fallen dynasties. Under no matter what régime, France will always be a troublesome neighbour to England, and a disturbing element to the permanent peace of Europe until she have either recovered her lost provinces or been irrevocably beaten in the attempt. Neither of those events is likely to happen under the Third Republic, unless the Third Republic produces a class of men — both civil and military — different from those who have held sway since its establishment. The worst foreign policy of a nation is to hold her neighbours too cheap: this was proved by the events of 1870-71, and by the diplomatic prologues to it played by Napoleon III., in which he tried to overreach Bismarck. The next worst foreign policy of a nation is to hold her neighbours and rivals too dear—as Prussia, until the advent of Bismarck, and even afterwards, did with regard

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[1] There are many proofs of Napoleon I.'s belief in his 'star,' two of which I may cite here *à titre de curiosité*. In 1808, General Rapp, on his return from the siege of Dantzig, having occasion to consult the Emperor urgently, entered his private room without being announced. The Emperor was apparently lost in thought and wholly unaware of the presence of Rapp, who did not venture to address him. The silence having been prolonged for some time, Rapp became uneasy, thinking that the Emperor was ill, and he made a slight noise to attract his attention. Napoleon turned round immediately, and catching hold of Rapp's arm, saying, 'Don't you see it? It's my star. . . . It's there . . . before you . . . shining brightly.' Gradually getting more animated, he exclaimed, 'It has never abandoned me; I see it on every important occasion; it orders me to go forward, and it is a sign of good fortune to me.' Towards the end of 1811, Cardinal Fesch implored the Emperor to cease making war upon people, the elements, and religion. 'Do you see that star on high?' asked Napoleon brusquely, leading his uncle to an open window. 'No, sire,' replied the Cardinal. 'Look again.' 'I fail to see it, sire.' 'Well, I do see it,' vivaciously said Napoleon, evidently displeased at the Cardinal's obstinacy.

Napoleon III. shared the faith of his uncle in the Napoleonic star. After the fall of the Second Empire, thousands of begging letters were found at the Tuileries; and nearly all of these were annotated in the Emperor's handwriting, mentioning the sums that had been sent in reply.

Napoleon III. spent on an average £140,000 per annum in this way—thus £2,500,000 during the eighteen years of his reign. When we consider that this same man left an income of less than £5000 to his widow, the reader will agree that the words lavish and indiscriminate are not misplaced. I am not concerned here with the private fortune of the Empress Eugénie, for although it is true that she pledged her jewels in the beginning of September 1870 in England, in order to face the immediate necessities for herself and her small band of followers, it is by no means certain that necessity compelled that step. With regard to the Emperor's invincible belief in his 'star,' here is the proof. By his will, drawn up while he was still on the throne, everything was left to the Empress, not the smallest provision having been made for the son whom he loved with a deep-seated, almost idolatrous affection. It was because Napoleon III. felt confident that his star would prolong his days until he had seen that son firmly established as his successor on the throne. In that case, there would have been no necessity to provide for him, and it would have been but just for the Empress to enjoy the revenues. But for that will, the Prince Imperial might be alive and probably on the throne of his father. The command of some money to keep up his station in society fitly, and to indulge in some of the pleasures of a young man of his age, would have unquestionably prevented him from going to Zululand.

to Austria. The middle and only sensible course for a nation is to get an accurate knowledge of the men who profess to or really shape the destiny of her rivals. I shall endeavour, within the limits of my capacities, to impart that accurate knowledge by sketching the men and things of the Third Republic as I have seen them at work, and do so without the fear of the possibly adverse comments of reviewers who, whatever their general knowledge of French history and other qualifications, have not devoted as many days to the study of those points as I have devoted years—of reviewers whose lives have been spent in England, and not in France, and who, consequently, have never seen, let alone been in frequent contact with, the personages who enacted the leading part in those transactions (there is scarcely another word for the chief events of the Third Republic).

Among the men whom Bismarck had called 'chevaliers du pavé,' and their hangers-on, there were probably not more than a couple whose aim was really honest, and who were not animated, on the one hand, by the desire for revenge on the régime which had successfully kept them at bay for eighteen years, or on the other hand by the wish for fat places and sinecures—unless they were impelled by both these motives. Lest this should appear exaggerated, I proceed to quote the utterances of some of the veterans among the men of the 4th September. 'If I had happened to contribute personally to the fall of the Imperial Government,' said Glais-Bizoin, 'far from defending myself against the charge, I should glory in it.' And forthwith he gave the reason. 'The day Louis

Napoleon broke his oath, he virtually placed himself beyond the pale of the law' (Deposition before the Commission of Inquiry). Glais-Bizoin conveniently forgot that he himself had broken everything—laws, constitution, and oath.

'As far as I am concerned,' exclaimed Crémieux, 'I confess to having witnessed the revolution of the 4th September with the utmost joy and happiness' (Deposition before the Commission of Inquiry).

Yet another greybeard who explains the part he has knowingly taken in this revolution which, in the face of the enemy overrunning the country, deliberately and wilfully broke or clogged the mechanism by which civilised states are governed. 'My action was not legislative; it was an insurrectionary action against a Government born of insurrection' (Deposition of M. Etienne Arago before the Commission of Inquiry).

That was a downright falsehood. The Second Empire was no more than the First born of an insurrection. There was no insurrection in Paris immediately preceding the 18th-19th Brumaire; there was no insurrection immediately preceding the Coup d'État of December 1851. There were, however, two formidable insurrections during the Second Republic, one of which was stamped out by the Prince-President, who on that day might have had himself proclaimed Emperor with or without the co-operation of General Changarnier. He waited for more than two years, perhaps because his project was not ripe; probably because he would not have it said that this project was the offspring of revolt.

The Second Empire owed nothing to the mob; it was, if one likes, the work of conspirators, but of conspirators who worked for the cause of order instead of the cause of disorder; of conspirators who had the grandeur and the daring of conspirators, not of plotters who did not dare to call their souls their own and who truckled in every way to the rabble and the scum. If the reader doubts this, let him read the doings of Louis Napoleon during that last month of 1851 and compare them with the doings of Favre, Gambetta, and the rest during the month of September 1870. The former's action may have been cruel and unscrupulous, but it was the action of a man of grit, not the letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would' of a set of constitutional cowards. Macbeth, at any rate, finally showed his courage in his encounter with Macduff, while Favre, Gambetta, Ferry, and nearly all the others subsequently either shirked such encounters or made themselves contemptibly ridiculous over them. There are only a few exceptions to this statement: Floquet, Clémenceau, and Rochefort were always ready to draw the sword, and they, curiously enough, were not the absolutely real progenitors of the Third Republic. They only came in when the brat was more or less washed and dressed.

Least of all did Louis Napoleon and the men who helped him allow the régime they had swept away to be insulted and the adversaries whom they had defeated to be held up to scorn. They—the Imperialists—sent them into exile, transported and imprisoned them, which Favre, Crémieux, Arago, and Gambetta had not the pluck to do; but the Imperialists did not resort to offensive lampoons—as distinct from biting caricatures. Gambetta did not confine himself to vaunting the charms and to hiding the vices of the Republic, which in his despatches was already alluded to as the definite régime of France—although there had been no elections. In order to impress the nation with the value and valour of the new dispensation, the most atrocious calumnies about the Second Empire were sown broadcast. I would fain say as little as possible in these pages of a certain section of the French press, the very section which coined the expression of 'reptile journalism.' This much, however, I can state conscientiously: among the lowest strata of newspaper writers in Europe, France excepted, there could not be found then, and there cannot be found now, any single writer, still less a set, willing to prostitute his capacity and to sully his pen with the garbage which was published at the direct instigation of Gambetta. By that time the Tuileries had been rifled for the private papers of the Imperial family, and they were supposed to contain proofs of the enormous treasures amassed by the Emperor, whom those same scribes represented as having quaked with fear at Sedan, and of having finally flung himself at the knees of the King of Prussia on the morning of the 2nd September. Princess Mathilde had also done her share of looting, though less successfully than her cousin, for she had been caught, red-handed, carrying away large cases filled with freshly coined gold, and of course belonging to the Republic.

The pencil came to the aid of the pen. I have seen a dozen different caricatures of Napoleon III., all of which reminded one of nothing so much as of those pasteboard pictures of Mr. Newbery, mentioned by Macaulay in connection with Byron. There was always the same head with the aquiline nose and waxed moustache, the whole surmounted by the green cap of the convict on the hulks. But the body was dressed differently. Now it represented a general—then it was attired in court costume; but the most offensive of these pictures was the matching of the rest of the garments with the above-mentioned headgear, and one foot dragging the galley-slave's cannon-ball along. All these productions were openly displayed in the booksellers' windows at Tours, and on more than one occasion I noticed sincere republicans turning away from them with disgust.

Not content with abetting, nay, directly instigating, such exhibitions, the Government of the National Defence—or what at that moment amounted to the same in the provinces—bethought itself of writing the history of the Second Empire *à sa façon* in a publication entitled the *Bulletin de la République*, which professed to replace the *Moniteur des Communes* of the preceding régime. The sheet appeared three times a week, and was addressed to the prefects and sub-prefects for distribution among the officials of the cantons and communes under their administration. The mayors were bound to display it, 'immediately on reception, in the most conspicuous spot of their jurisdiction.' And the most benighted citizens were to reap the inestimable benefit of the contents. The schoolmaster was likewise compelled to contribute to the dissemination of the hatred of the Second Empire by reading aloud, either at the Town Hall (*mairie*) or at the communal school, the principal articles of the *Bulletin de la République*. The reading was 'compulsory on Sunday'; during the week a certain latitude was allowed, though Gambetta's order prescribed that the occasions should be made as numerous as possible. The circular, dated 10th November 1870, expressly stated that 'the schoolmaster should make it his special care to bring to his readers' knowledge articles of doctrine and of history, the object of which is to enlighten the minds of the people, to teach them their political and social duties, and to show them the essential truth that the Republic, and only the Republic, can ensure to them, in consequence of its free institutions, the grandeur and the future of France.'

This was the man who during the Second Empire had never ceased to bawl against the use of the schoolmaster as an electioneering agent. The Second Empire decidedly never employed the schoolmaster as a political lecturer or preacher; least of all did the *Moniteur des Communes*, against which the republicans were always tilting, contain anything like the stories dished up in Gambetta's sleep.

IX

JULES SIMON

Among the most delightful short stories of the Vicomte Joseph de Ségur, 'L'Histoire de l'Épingle' unquestionably deserves the palm. It is practically a very delicate satire on the men and manners of the First Revolution, and crammed with half a hundred anecdotes, all throwing a more effulgent light on the real causes that prompted these men's actions than any number of volumes of logical disquisition could have done. The most pertinent to my subject might have been written prophetically, with a view to define the attitude of the Third Republic towards Jules Simon. The First Republic is represented in the guise of a flighty woman, her would-be lover as an honest, but not particularly fascinating, man. 'I have not the time to learn to respect you; matters would be simplified if you could manage to please me, we should get along more quickly,' she says. In vain does the suitor plead his sterling qualities. 'Yes, yes, this is all very well,' replies the coquette, 'and I am very sorry for you; but honesty without gracefulness, and unaccompanied by a "spice of the devil," is only fit for use in the family circle.'

Truly, Jules Simon was not without gracefulness, not the most hectoring bully of the Gambetta type denied him the possession of it; but the 'spice of the devil,' as exemplified by a constant craving for breakneck legislation in order to captivate the democratic element, was utterly lacking. Jules Simon was, moreover, undesirable as a republican collaborateur in many other respects. He had not only the bad taste to believe in God, but the worse taste to introduce Him into the debates over and over again, entirely forgetful of the fact that Voltaire, a century before then, had voted God 'un peu démodé,' and that whatever else the new republican rulers of the land did not know in connection with the philosopher of Ferney and his writings, they knew the 'Henriade,' 'La Pucelle,' and the short sentence which relegated Providence to the lumber-room of belief. Then there was Jules Simon's senseless habit of publicly acknowledging that his political adversaries were possessed of talent, and of being serviceable to them, entirely regardless of the disadvantages that might result to himself and his party from such 'Quixotic' behaviour. 'When shall we republicans cease to compliment our adversaries in public on their talent?' exclaimed Edmond Scherer one day when Jules Ferry was praising M. Chesnelong—the same who played so important a part in the mission to the Comte de Chambord in 1873, and whose book on the subject was published a twelvemonth ago. And the late President of the Senate, perceiving that he had made a blunder, held his tongue, thus practically accepting the justice of the rebuke. The majority of the republicans in the Chamber were of opinion that M. Edmond Scherer on that day deserved well of his country.

As for Jules Simon's readiness to serve his political opponents, well, the man had never done anything else in his life; and when I say the man, I include the child, who is supposed to be father to the man. For, before the future senator and minister was out of his 'teens, he had accomplished an act which alone would entitle him to a place in the collection of boy-heroes by the side of the lads Joseph Viala and Joseph Barra, both of whom fell at thirteen, the latter a victim of Chouan fanaticism and lust for blood, because he persisted in crying 'Vive la République' when his assailants bade him cry 'Vive le Roi'; the former in trying to bar the passage of the Durance at Avignon to the Royalists. The year 1793 marked the death of both.

The Vendée was likewise the scene of an exploit of young Simon, for his father, a native of Lorraine and a Jew, had migrated thither at some period of the First Revolution. The elder Suisse—for that was the father's real name, which the son dropped later on at the suggestion of Victor Cousin, his professor and friend—was, as a matter of course, a republican. Like the majority of his co-religionists, he was under the impression that the Revolution had emancipated him and his brethren, when it was in reality Louis XVI., who in 1784 had knocked off the first link of the chain that had fettered them for ages. Equally as a matter of course, Suisse brought up his son (born in 1814) according to his political lights. As time went on, the teaching became more stern, not only on account of the lad's advance in years, but in consequence of the events around them. The republicans had certainly regretted the overtoppling of the already tottering and only quasi-republican régime by the First Consul; but the Empire that had been built on its ruins had consoled them for many of their miscarried aspirations. When the giant came to earth with a crash, a staunch republican, if ever there was one, the maternal grandfather of Arsène Houssaye, exclaimed: 'I weep because Napoleon took from us the Republic to smother it in his imperial bed; I weep because he who comforted us for the loss of the Republic is chained to his English rock.' And Citizen Mailfer expressed but the feelings of the majority of republicans at the collapse of the modern Caesar, which was doubly embittered to them by the restoration of the Bourbons, who had brought the foreigner in their wake; or, to speak correctly, by the invasion of the sacred soil of France by the hated alien for the sake of restoring a dynasty 'to which the very word "liberty" was an abomination' (the quotation marks are not mine). How this feeling rankled in the breasts of those whose political faith was even less unbending than the advanced republican's must be shown by one instance only, for considerations of space compel me to be brief. When Louvel stood arraigned for the murder of the Duc de Berri, the Procurator-General flung the word 'coward' repeatedly into his face. 'Coward, coward!' cried Louvel at last, 'you do not know, monsieur, what courage it implies to kill a man who has never done you any harm.' And when asked to state the motive that made him commit the crime, he drew himself up to his full length, and said in a loud voice: '*Since the* 18*th June* 1815 *I have never ceased to hear the booming of the cannon of Waterloo.*'

It was amidst this smouldering hatred of the Bourbons that Jules Simon grew up; for we must remember that in the Vendée the still vigilant eye of the erstwhile Chouans, with the greater part of their occupation gone, kept it from bursting into flame. It was amidst this smouldering hatred of the Bourbons, intensified by the stories of the past and gone 'White Terror' in the south, and the cruel persecution of Napoleon's foremost generals, all of which stories, we may be sure, lost nothing in the telling by the republicans, that Jules Simon emerged from childhood into boyhood and took his seat on the forms of the college at Vannes. When, shortly after his appearance there, the Bourbons were driven once more from France, all the passions on both sides blazed forth afresh; nevertheless young Suisse, by his own confession, was not altogether unhappy among the young desperadoes, who were all older than he, who, as it were, had sucked in guerilla warfare with the mother's milk, and 'who allowed him to be a republican,' just as ordinary people allow a poet to pursue his dreams in their midst—that is, with more or less good-natured contempt. At the time being this was practically enough for the lad, for as yet he was only a republican 'from obedience, pending the day he should become one by study and reflection.'

On the first morning of the October term of 1831 young Suisse, whose parents lived in Belle-Isle-en-Mer—made famous in history by Louis XIV.'s superintendent of finances, Fouquet, and doubly famous in fiction by Alexandre Dumas the Elder—was late for mass, in consequence of the delay experienced by the tidal boat. When he entered the chapel he saw none but grave and anxious faces around him. After the service he was told that Brossard, the maire of Bignan, had been found murdered in his room, and that the three brothers Nayl, two of whom were still at the college, were suspected of the crime. Brossard, the murdered magistrate, had been relieved of his functions during the reign of Charles X. on account of his well-known liberal opinions, and reinstated by the government of Louis Philippe. The brothers Nayl, on the other hand, were timid and well behaved, like young girls, very religious, and devotedly fond of one another. Liberalism, however, was profoundly repugnant to them; any other régime than that of the Bourbons aroused their horror, like that of the majority of the scholars of the college of Vannes, the predecessors of whom in the former generation had deserted the schoolrooms *en masse* to follow the fortunes of Georges Cadoudal. The Nayls had been fed on these traditions; they had, moreover, been seen with a band of the insurgents the like of which had been terrorising the country for the last twelvemonth. The band in question had openly invaded Brossard's house, and, worse than all, one of the Nayls's hats, with his name inside, was found in a corner of the room, a few steps away from Brossard's body.

In spite of all these overwhelming proofs not one of the Nayls had had a hand in the murder; on the contrary, at the risk of their own lives they had endeavoured to prevent the deed. But evidence to this effect was absolutely wanting, inasmuch as the real murderers were in hiding, and to a great extent aided in their concealment by those who, by a curious perversion of mind perhaps, considered the lives of 'assassins for the cause' more precious than the lives of those who would prevent assassination. Anyhow, the Nayls were tried, convicted, sentenced to death, and would have suffered their doom but for young Suisse, who first induced them to appeal against the sentence, and then, during the respite granted to them, averted the knife by months of heroic self-sacrifice, in the course of which he did not scruple to hold out the hand of charity for the wife of the elder brother, reduced to starvation by her husband's imprisonment.

This was the lad who seven years later made his appearance at the École Normale, in Paris, as lecturer on the history of philosophy, a position the difficulties of which can only be appreciated by those who have carefully studied the anecdotal history and the daily life of the Quartier Latin during the whole of the reign of Louis Philippe, and for that matter during the reign of his immediate successor. The acknowledged capacity or the suspected incompetence of the professor was no factor whatever in the students' approval or disapproval of him. Pelegrino Rossi, who became subsequently the minister of Pius IX., and was assassinated in Rome in 1848, was hissed and driven from his chair less because he was a foreigner than because he was a protégé of Guizot, who in 1835 happened to be in bad odour with *la jeunesse des écoles.* Lherminier, another eminent professor of jurisprudence, was treated in a like manner in 1848, because ten years previously he had refused to fight a second duel, after having shown himself a man of courage in a first encounter. Hippolyte Royer-Collard, who must not be confounded with his great namesake and uncle, was worried into resigning his duties on a simple question of accidental etiquette with which the students had no concern whatever. Sainte-Beuve and Saint-Marc Girardin were treated with equally scant courtesy, on pretexts even less futile than those I have mentioned. Désiré Nisard, and half a dozen other professors, would scarcely complete this list of the students' victims who, all but one, submitted to their ruffianism without the least attempt at reprisal. Royer-Collard was the exception. Having left the École de Médecine, whose students refused to listen to him, he arranged within twenty-four hours for a course of free lectures at the École Pratique. At the conclusion of the first he was met outside by a couple of hundred brawlers from the other institution, who persisted in following him on his way home, hissing, yelling, and bawling improvised ditties offensive to him.

He took not the slightest notice of them until he reached the Pont-des-Arts, where in those days there was a toll of one sou; flinging down a gold piece, and turning to the rabble, he said aloud to the toll-keeper, 'Take for all these gentlemen, they are with me.'

The reader will require no further introduction to the audience the young professor had to confront at his first lecture. If at that moment some jackanapes had taken it into his head to draw attention to the simple fact that they were going to listen to a protégé of Victor Cousin, the professional career of Jules Simon would have been, if not nipped in the bud, at least retarded for several years, for Victor Cousin, with all deference to his memory and great attainments, could *politically* have been twisted into anything. His attitude during the July revolution, or rather his want of attitude, his subsequent funeral oration—when he felt practically certain which way the cat *had* jumped—on Farcy, a young student at the École Normale, who had been killed on the Place du Carrousel while fighting in the insurgent ranks; these and a dozen instances of his political 'circumspection,' to use the mildest term, would have made him an easy target in the person of one of his well-known favourite disciples, and of which verbal rifle-practice the disciple would have had to pay the cost—for we must bear in mind throughout that we are dealing with Frenchmen, whose moral code never admitted of good-natured tolerance of an adversary during the heat of battle, still less of fair play or downright quarter. During a truce, or at the conclusion of a peace, however shortlived, there may be a *rapprochement* between a few isolated members of the opposite parties; but even this is exceedingly rare. During the greater part of the seventies, while the Assembly sat at Versailles, two or three deputies often clubbed together for a cab from and to the station; if, however, they happened to belong to different sides of the House, the red silken blinds of the carriage were invariably let down, 'to avoid comment.' In summer, when the coupé disappeared from the rank to make room for the victoria, such associations always ceased. During the trial of Prince Pierre Bonaparte for the murder of Victor Noir, at Tours, in March 1870, the reporters of the Opposition papers refused to stay at the same hotels with those of the Government organs; as for sitting down at the same *table d'hôte*, the idea was positively laughed to scorn. Younger Frenchmen are still more prone to such exhibitions of political intolerance than their elders, and it need scarcely be said that Jules Simon's audience on the occasion of his début in Paris consisted mainly of young men. Without exaggeration, then, one may say that he escaped the fate of some of his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors by a miracle.

Nor am I exaggerating when I state, that during my long experience of France I have not seen more than a couple of young Frenchmen absolutely free from that defect. However broad-minded in other respects, ninety-nine per cent. of these are certain to run aground in the narrow channel of political passion. So true is this that I need only cite one instance to this effect in connection with a youth who in his subsequent career was considered by all those who judged him impartially as the incarnation of tolerance—not to say of ultra-tolerance. It is not generally known, for few writers have mentioned the fact, that late in the thirties Jules Simon held political meetings in the arrondissement of Lannion, with a view of contesting a seat for the Côtes-du-Nord, if a vacancy should occur—an event which, as far as he was concerned, did not happen until a decade afterwards. One day during his preliminary canter he spoke at a meeting at Tréguier, and among his audience there was a student from the Petit Séminaire, a mere lad, who so persistently and effectually 'heckled' the speaker—without, however, disconcerting him in the least — as to cause a sensation. Unfortunately for the *séminariste,* the *régent* of his college was present also, and he, strange to relate, was a liberal. When the 'heckler,' rather elated with his doings, entered the class-room after the meeting, an imposition was given him, and it was only by his clever retort to the Latin distich he was told to copy that he escaped the punishment. The *séminariste's* name was Ernest Renan, aged fifteen.

A decade later Jules Simon, who had become Renan's editor, paid a visit with his contributor to the seminary at Tréguier. Simon kept examining the forms.

'What are you looking for?' asked Renan.

'I am looking for your name on the forms.'

'My dear friend, you may save yourself the trouble. I have never scratched either a form or a comrade with a penknife. This kind of thing does not agree with my temperament.'

Jules Simon might have said absolutely the same thing with regard to his purely literary and professional career, which, for the sake of the man himself, ought never to have been supplemented by a political one. In the exercise of the latter he stabbed twice and scratched often, or, to be correct, he employed graceful terriers in the shape of refined articles which kept scratching, and poked their dainty nozzles into the garbage-heaps of the real Third Republic—as distinct from the nominal one, previously to the retirement of MacMahon. The man would have been more than human if he had resisted the temptation after the treatment he received at the hands of those, nearly all of whom he had helped to make. With regard to both the stabbing and scratching, Jules Simon is a kind of King Lear, or, to keep strictly within French nomenclature and within the truth, the Père Goriot of the Third Republic. For Jules Simon had no outbursts of all-devouring fury, like Shakespeare's majestic figure; Jules Simon was nearly throughout like Balzac's too-accommodating hero. The fact of the retired and doting tradesman's fondness for his daughters did not justify his senile concessions to them, his ignoble complicity in their liaisons, his too accommodating protection of their lovers, who to a certain extent batten and fatten upon him and them. If my memory serves me aright—for it is many years since I have opened a volume of Balzac's—Goriot at the beginning of his commercial career was not entirely *sans peur et sans reproche.* He not only indulged in sharp practices with his avowed opponents and rivals in trade, but was not above playing a double-faced game with neighbours with whom, apparently, he was on good terms. He devised combinations to outrival them. 'All this is fair in trade,' says the practical man of to-day. It may be; but I refuse to admit that it is fair in politics, even if all this double-dealing be practised on a majestic scale—I had almost said on a sublime scale—in the manner Bismarck practised it. I refuse to admit that it is fair, in spite of the general leniency accorded to such practices.

And Jules Simon, though an honest and staunch republican, was too anxious to overthrow the Second Empire—not vicariously, but personally—and became guilty of duplicity. Let us listen to M. Alfred Darimon, who is not suspected of hostility to the republican cause. M. Darimon is recounting one of the incidents of the election of 1863.

> 'A candidate had still to be provided for the ninth (metropolitan) division. Several names were suggested, but just when a definite choice was going to be made, M. Havin requested an adjournment until the next day. He was in a position to state that steps were being taken to decide one of the foremost men of the democratic party to offer himself for election; that these steps were likely to be crowned with success, and that the effect of such election would

Jules Simon

compensate for the delay of twenty-four hours in closing the list.

'The democratic man of note, to whom M. Havin, the editor-in-chief of the *Siècle,* had alluded, was none other than M. Jules Simon. Up to the last moment M. Jules Simon had been a frantic abstentionist.[1] But, as he said in a letter to his friend Charras, which epistle has acquired a certain amount of fame, the elections were uppermost in everybody's mind; 'every one wanted to be a deputy, or instrumental in making deputies'; and finally he, like everybody else, had caught the electoral itch (*prurigo* electoral). This letter to Charras has laid bare the duplicity which constitutes the foundation of M. Jules Simon's political character. But he who can read between the lines will have no difficulty in perceiving in all this an inordinate desire "to join the dance which was being performed by the illustrious Five."[2] The author of the *Devoir* took it almost for granted that Colonel Charras would relieve him of his abstentionist vows, but the brave and loyal soldier refused to take the hint. Consequently, when M. Jules Simon had made up his mind to make the big jump, he, Charras, yielded to a movement of most natural indignation, and gave publicity to this letter, which offered a perfect contrast to the new attitude of his correspondent.

'The "Letter to Charras" weighed on M. Jules Simon's conscience; hence his prolonged hesitation to condescend to be something like an understudy of Darimon (an inferior, a sub-Darimon), and to figure by the side of the Five whom he treated with profound contempt, will be understood. How, in fact, can we explain his having consented to place his hand in that of Ollivier after the following incredible sentence: "It would have been sensible to get Lavertujon in; he would have stood a chance at Bordeaux; and his coming in might have produced a current in opposition to Ollivier's. To watch these youngsters enter upon the course that tries to combine the pleasures of popularity with the advantages of possible distinctions constitutes a real danger. I have told them in unmistakable terms that they were asking the republicans to make them deputies in order to sell the Republic the next day, like their patron."

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[1] Read that he refused to take the oath to the Empire.

[2] The five Oppositionists who had been returned in 1857, and who practically formed the nucleus of the republican party which took possession of the country on the 4th September 1870.

'If we had been aware of the existence of this infamous letter,' concludes M. Darimon, 'we certainly should not have consented to open our ranks to M. Jules Simon. But he offered himself to us as an ally, and he subscribed beforehand to all the resolutions that had been taken. It did, therefore, not occur to us for one moment to ask him to explain his conversion, which was as sudden as unexpected. His name was calculated to disconcert the abstentionist party; in virtue of this title he was inscribed without opposition on the list at the last meeting, which took place at M. Jules Favre's.'

The charge preferred by M. Darimon is not a light one, and is, moreover, based upon a document, the existence of which is not open to doubt. We shall not insist here on Jules Simon's share in the undermining of the Empire by his steadfast opposition to all the Emperor's projects for reforming the army; nor do we care to make use of the documents at our command to show that the main responsibility for the war of 1870 lies with the party to which he belonged, and which blindly obeyed the dictates of Thiers. After all, Jules Simon was not singular in this respect; he acted according to his republicanism. A much graver charge against him remains. Having put his hand into that of Émile Ollivier in 1863, the most elementary principles of political rectitude compelled him to stand by and fall with Napoleon III.'s liberal minister. What he did instead was to band with the most irreconcilable opponents of his own party to bring about Ollivier's fall. There is no need to take my word for it. In an unguarded moment he himself confessed this one day: 'We succeeded without difficulty in overthrowing the Government, because all the different parties, *even the Court party*, were our auxiliaries.'

The story of the beginnings of the Third Republic, from the 4th September 1870 to the Convocation of the National Assembly at Bordeaux in February 1871, has been so recently told in the pages of the *Fortnightly Review* that I need not refer to it at length a second time. Jules Simon's dealings with Gambetta during the latter part of this business have been variously judged. In some quarters they have been praised as the perfection of crafty statesmanship; in others as the most contemptible instance of truckling to a loud-voiced, brawling, hectoring mountebank who ought to have been silenced there and then—not temporarily, as was the case, but for ever. It is a moot point whether Jules Simon, or for that matter any other civilian, could have done this at the time without incurring the risk of having the cherished infant-republic stifled by at least half a dozen communes springing up simultaneously all over the land, before Thiers could have got at the interesting infant, to wash, comb, swaddle, and present it to the world as the fruit of his old age. I am, however, not concerned here with Thiers, but with Jules Simon, who, if the truth were known, was a far more sincere republican than the other, and for that very reason ought to have made an end of Gambetta at the very first opportunity by denouncing his conduct when the denunciation would have had its effect. But the attempt was never made, and it is in virtue of this culpable silence and trimming that Simon reminds one of Balzac's retired vermicelli manufacturer rather than of Shakespeare's noble figure. Having set his heart and mind upon a certain alliance for his daughters, Goriot is bent upon one thing, the keeping of the peace, and submits to indignities from his future sons-in-law even at the discussion of the marriage settlements. The submission inspires one with a feeling of disgust that positively swamps all the nascent feelings of pity and admiration which the theoretically sublime paternity evokes for a moment — but for a moment only.

Jules Simon, like Goriot, had his reward. He 'established' his daughter, the Third Republic, as Goriot 'established' his girls, and for a while he was the honoured, petted guest in the new ménage. Then came the decline and downfall, which the most superficial observer of the history of the Republic for the last nineteen years will be enabled to work out for himself without my aid. If the collapse and end of Jules Simon were not so thorough and utterly sad as those of the erstwhile boarder at the Pension Vauquer, whom Rastignac accompanied to his grave, no thanks are due to the memories of Gambetta, Ferry, Floquet, or to the living who swagger and strut still, and who have made the Third Republic a byword among the nations. The thoroughly tragic end was averted by the better, the admiration-compelling Jules Simon himself, who manfully accepted the ingratitude of those whom he had raised to high places, and who set to work, not to repair his fallen fortunes—for it will redound to the glory of Jules Simon's memory that his fortunes were never improved by his ministerial position—but to forget this ingratitude by the exercise of his nobler faculties—the disinterested love of, the sterling capacities for, literature.

It would be a pleasant task to dwell upon him at great length in this aspect, for the charm he spread around him, purely and solely as a *littérateur*, whether in his writings or in his conversation, will not be easily forgotten by those who came under the influence of it. It is no exaggeration to say that whatever subject his pen touched or his lips broached was adorned by him. An hour's chat with Jules Simon, in his fifth floor on the Place de la Madeleine, on no matter what pretext, was a stimulant. Less classical—probably because he wished to be — than his contemporary, Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, who preceded him to the tomb by a few months, less brilliant than his friend of many years' standing, Ernest Renan, his *causerie* made fewer demands upon the listener's mental faculties than the *causerie* of either of the other two. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire's *causerie* was incomplete; it lacked the experience of the greatest ordeal of all sublunary ordeals —the ordeal of marriage, paternity, and family life; one had to supplement his remarks. Renan's *causerie* was more than complete. It took one through the whole gamut of life's harmony, but of its cacophony also, and almost attempted to be one's guide 'through after life' and back again. One had to deduct from it. Simon's *causerie*, in virtue of the *causeur's* invincible faith, was absolutely complete. In less than two years after his disappearance from active public life—for the Senate at its best is but a political Chelsea Hospital, although the Invalides have been known to revolt—the bitterness of bygone disappointments was apparently gone. The criticisms on his fast-succeeding literary labours had not the power, as in the case of Renan, to provoke cynical retorts. 'I cannot afford them,' said Jules Simon; 'they do not come in shoals, as with Renan, who, after all, gives but of his superfluity. The few good thoughts that strike me now and again I must reserve for my writings, for I have to live by them.' How well he did reserve them, those who read the *Gaulois* during the first six months of 1882, when he was not only its editor-in-chief, but an almost daily contributor, can justify. Unfortunately, those who did thus read, or at any rate bought what they had read, were too few. The present writer would have liked to quote them wholesale, for it is by his literary and social qualities, rather than by his political failures, that Jules Simon will live in the minds of his friends and admirers. Jules Simon, like the Protestant minister, Athanasius Coquerel, would have liked to prove that the republican system was based on the Gospel. The republicans, on the other hand, constantly reminded him that, as Dupin had it, 'Christ did not say, "My Republic is not of this world."' Nevertheless, the vituperation exceeded by far the remuneration. One day an ultra-Radical journal, which is dead, buried, and forgotten by now, called the writer 'le cocu de la troisième République.' 'That 's a dangerous word to use in writing nowadays,' said Jules Simon during the evening of that day, when his attention had been drawn to the article. 'I am not at all certain whether the term has not been suppressed from polite journalism, and although I am apt enough to use slang in ordinary conversation, I do not feel inclined to perpetuate it in print. But I tell you what I will do; I will tell you a tale which you are at liberty to repeat, even to the writer of the article. Years ago I knew a Frenchwoman of more than flighty character, who was married to an Englishman, a very worthy but stolid fellow, whose religious opinions forbade him to seek a divorce, even if he had been able to obtain it, in France. As the woman grew older her flightiness ceased—for very good reasons, the admirers fell off. I do not say that this is the case with the Republic, but it may be. On one occasion the lady, quarrelling with her spouse, spat the word "cocu" at him. "Va, sale cocu," she screamed. He stood perfectly composed. "Pas maintenant," he sneered quietly.'

Apropos of this reluctance to use slang, here is another story which paints the man in his joyous days. On that occasion his interlocutor was Littré, his fellow-member in the Versailles days of the National Assembly. Littré was not at all opposed to argot. He employed many collaborateurs to look out quotations for him for his dictionary, and no restrictions were imposed. The collaborateurs might cull them from the most harum-scarum vaudeville. 'Do you know, my dear Littré,' said Simon one afternoon, 'do you know that you do not use sufficient circumspection with regard to your dictionary. I find words there which are downright slang.' Littré began to feel somewhat uneasy. 'Tell me; what are they?' he asked.—'Well, there is, for instance, the word "guibolle" for leg.' 'The word "guibolle" in my dictionary?' gasped the philologist, turning paler than usual and rushing to the library to look at his own book, in which, of course, he did not find the incriminated term. It was merely a joke on the part of the Minister of Public Education.

X

A PRETENDER AND HIS FAMILY

The future historian of the house of Orléans will find a difficulty in explaining the anomaly of a pretender who at several moments of his career seemed absolutely reluctant to be taken at his word, and at one period deliberately neglected to use the means apparently within his grasp for enforcing his claim in the only way in which a pretender can hope to succeed, namely, by force of arms. I say ‘apparently,’ for I am alluding to the period when the Duc de Chartres was the colonel of a cavalry regiment quartered at Rouen, and the Duc d'Aumale commander of the 7th Corps d'Armée; and though I feel certain that both the Corps d'Armée and the regiment would have followed their leaders on any and at the least signal, I am by no means convinced that this signal would have been forthcoming on the part of the Duc d'Aumale at the bidding of his nephew. Lest this should appear the irresponsible assertion of a mere looker-on, and an alien to France to boot, I hasten to give proof in support. During a conversation which took place in 1881 between the Duc d'Aumale and the Comte Henri d'Ideville, one of the staunchest and at the same time most highly gifted adherents to the Orléanist cause, the latter endeavoured to draw the explanation, which I foresee will puzzle the historian, from the best-known son of Louis Philippe. At that time the Duke had been deprived of his command, and, moreover, shorn of his functions of 'Inspector-General' of the French army. I do not blame the republicans for one instant for what they did; I am only stating facts.

On the day in question M. d'Ideville, profiting by the confidential tone the interview had assumed, suddenly remarked: 'When I reflect, monseigneur, that in this very street,[1] but a few steps away from us, at the Élysée itself, there dwells the successor of your ancestors, the chief magistrate of France, the sorry personage called President Grévy; and that at this particular moment Algeria, which had at its head men like your Highness, Marshal Bugeaud, and Admiral Gueydon, is governed by a petty provincial barrister, by the brother of this Grévy;—when I reflect upon all this, monseigneur, I am compelled to admit that the times have indeed changed.' To which the Duke sadly replied, 'What's the use, Monsieur d'Ideville? We must bear with misfortune; both our services have been dispensed with.' Seeing that his interlocutor received his first remark in a sympathetic spirit, M. d'Ideville ventured upon a second. 'Monseigneur,' he said, 'I trust you will pardon my boldness, but since I have been seated here with you there is one thought which persistently obtrudes itself. When a half-century or a century hence our grandchildren and our grand-nephews shall study the annals of our times, Heaven alone knows how many among them will suddenly lay down their books to ponder a confused and inexplicable point of our present history. I should like to know what answer even the most learned professors of those days that are to come could make to the following question addressed to them by the student: "How was it that in 1880 there could exist in France a republican Government with a 'log-president,' called Grévy, which drove God from the schools, forcibly closed the churches, expelled the sisters of charity from the hospitals and asylums, allowed France to be insulted by the foreign powers, and disorganised and degraded the army and the magistracy; while at the same time France had at the head of one of her armies a prince of the house of Bourbon, the most popular of all those princes, esteemed by every one, looked up to for his lofty intellect, beloved for his goodness and his courage, the absolute master of a vast Corps d'Armée, and in addition to all this, the richest nobleman in France?" "How was it," the young questioner of 1980 will assuredly add, when brought to a standstill by the mystery of this insoluble problem, "How was it that this same prince, with all his prestige and disposing of so much authority, allowed himself to be stripped of his command and of his grade, and allowed his country to become the prey of a Government so utterly despicable and so utterly despised?"' This time the Duc d'Aumale did not answer at all, and merely smiled. 'I came to the conclusion,' winds up M. d'Ideville, 'that M. le Duc d'Aumale, being a great captain, scorns to be a great politician.'

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[1] The interview must have taken place at the mansion in the Faubourg St. Honoré, which the Duke leased or bought from the family of Fould, and which has been demolished since.

The conclusion is a charitable one, but it will not help the future historians out of the difficulty with regard to the attitude of the Duke's nephew. He, of all men, ought to have known, and probably did know, the opinions of his most prominent uncle—and for that matter, of all his uncles—on the subject of fomenting civil war for a purely dynastic purpose. He could not have cherished any illusions in that respect, he could not have flattered himself that the uncle, or rather uncles, would do for their nephew what the sons forbore to do for their father. It is an undisputed fact that in 1848 the Duc d'Aumale and the Prince de Joinville could have saved their father's throne had they chosen to do so. Again I beg to forestall the reader's possible objection to a mere statement of mine by giving him verse and chapter for it. I do this all the more readily because my doing so affords me the opportunity of adducing evidence even more valuable than that of M. d'Ideville, who in some quarters might be suspected of having taken too sanguine a view of the Duc d'Aumale's power of backing up his nephew's claim. In this instance the principal witness is the late General Fleury, Master of the Horse to Napoleon III., who might fairly claim to yield to no man in his devotion to the Second Empire, and to the Emperor himself. But that devotion did not prevent him from sincerely admiring the great military capacities of the Duc d'Aumale, and from expressing at the same time his astonishment at the course adopted by the Duke in 1848. The conversation from which I extract this note took place between General Fleury and the Comte d'Ideville a fortnight or so before the interview recorded above, and caused a great sensation in the Imperialist camp; the late Plon-Plon went even so far as to request M. Fleury to give it an unqualified denial, with which request, of course, the upright and honourable soldier refused point-blank to comply.

'I cannot help remembering,' said the General, 'that in 1847 I was within an ace of being appointed aide-de-camp to M. le Duc d'Aumale when he became Governor-General of Algeria. I repeat, the appointment was as good as settled. What a tangled skein is fate! I may be mistaken, and too self-confident; nevertheless, I fancy that had I been by the side of the Duc d'Aumale in February 1848, the Prince would not have relinquished his command. In fact, up to this day, I fail to explain to myself his departure. Just try to grasp the situation. An army, which was enthusiastically devoted to him body and soul, and only too eager to obey him, to follow him, positively implored him to act. The fleet of his brother, the Prince de Joinville, to the full as enthusiastic as the land forces, was there. The only thing these two princes had to do was to ship ten thousand men (the army numbered eighty thousand), and to set sail with them for Marseilles. In three days they would have brought back their father to the Tuileries in triumph. This attitude of the Duc d'Aumale, this untimely resignation, has always remained an unfathomable mystery to me. That man is, indeed, an enigma; for to one who has seen him, as I have, at La Smalah, where I was close to him, and where he displayed the most extraordinary qualities of daring, determination, and coolness of judgment face to face with danger and death, that flight from Algeria, so "needlessly constitutional," must ever appear a senseless and incomprehensible act.'

Senseless and incomprehensible, perhaps, to the 'soldier of fortune,' so called because he has no fortune whatsoever—to the soldier who has nothing to lose and everything to gain by a bold *coup.* Not so senseless and incomprehensible to those who have been taught that poverty is the greatest curse on earth, especially to men born in an exalted station of life; and it would be idle to maintain that the family of Louis Philippe were not so taught. If they did not suck in that lesson with the mother's milk, it had at any rate been drummed into their ears from their very infancy by their father, who, with a civil list of £750,000—which meant something more than it would now—was constantly haunted by the fear of poverty, and haunted to such a degree as to harass his friends and counsellors with his apprehensions. 'My dear minister,' he said one day to Guizot, after having recited to him a long list of his domestic charges—'my dear minister, I am telling you that my children will be wanting bread. When Harel, the manager of the Odéon, came to ask him for the loan of thirty thousand francs, Louis Philippe laughed, and merely said: 'My dear Monsieur Harel, I was just going to ask you for a similar loan.' During Queen Victoria's visit to Eu, in '43, her host was constantly telling her stories of his former poverty, and not in a cheerful retrospective manner, but with a depressing fear of a like future being in store for him. One morning, while the young matron and the 'competitor of *le père éternel*,' as Princesse Clémentine, the mother of Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, called her father, were strolling in the garden, the latter offered his royal guest a peach. The Queen seemed at a loss how to skin it; seeing which Louis Philippe took a large clasp-knife from his pocket. 'When a man has been a poor devil like myself, obliged to live upon forty sous a day, he always carries a knife. I might have dispensed with it for the last few years, but I do not wish to lose the habit. One does not know what may happen,' he said. The Queen was deeply affected, the tears stood in her eyes, and she did not recover her wonted spirits for hours. Bismarck has averred more than once that Louis Philippe, during his own reign, concocted news unfavourable to his dynasty, and speculated upon the results in the English stock-market.

That all but one of Louis Philippe's sons were willing pupils to their father's teaching admits of no doubt whatsoever. This does not mean that they could not be generous where it suited them, but they were determined that the means of being generous should not be taken from them. Fleury felt sure that an attempt of the Duc d'Aumale and the Prince de Joinville to restore their father to the throne by force of arms would have succeeded. I am inclined to subscribe to that opinion; nevertheless there was a chance of failure, and failure in that instance would have decidedly been fraught with the wholesale confiscation of their property. On the other hand, tacit submission to 'the will of the people' would, it was thought, avert such a catastrophe, and the d'Orléans were not mistaken. It is to the credit of both the Second and Third Republics that they did not proceed to unprovoked sequestration of the d'Orléans' estates, and yet one cannot altogether blame Louis Napoleon for having taken that measure in 1852. It was, after all, but an act of reprisal: the Bourbons had despoiled his uncle in the most shameless fashion, and it required no great amount of casuistry to identify the d'Orléans with the elder branch. For once in a way the wolf had logic on his side when he as good as said, 'If it was not you, it was your cousin.' A note by the way. In the opinion of those best fit to judge, the decree of confiscation was a small masterpiece, both as regards style and clearness, and people wondered as to its authorship, for all inquiries on the subject failed to bring the truth to light. Even up to the present day it is not generally known that the document was drafted by Teste, a former minister of Louis Philippe, whom the latter had left to shift for himself when he, the minister, and his colleague, General de Cubières, were arraigned for peculation in connection with the concession of a salt-mine. Morny, who was an Orléanist at heart, was indignant with his half-brother for the measure, but above all for having selected Teste. 'Why did you select him for the business?' he asked. 'Because love, like hate, is apt to make a fool of a man of genius, and a man of genius of a fool. Teste was an idiot to be "found out"; hate has made him a man of talent, at any rate for the time being.'

This, then, was the position of the d'Orléans family in 1871, when a turn of the tide apparently came. Sedan had been lost, the Empire overthrown, Paris had surrendered, France was thoroughly disorganised, and at that moment seemed as much in want of a saviour as in 1851. But Louis Philippe Albert, Comte de Paris, was not a Louis Napoleon, the Thiers of '71 was not the Thiers of '48-'51, and Gambetta was not a Lamartine. Worse than all, from the Orléanist point of view, MacMahon was neither a Cavaignac nor a Changarnier. He was thoroughly honest, and would neither seek power for himself nor, in spite of certain sympathies, knowingly allow himself to be made the cat's-paw for the restoration of no matter who. The d'Orléans princes knew this better than any one, the proof being, that while both the Imperialists and Legitimists attempted to win MacMahon to their side in '73, the adherents of the younger branch carefully abstained from such an attempt.

Nevertheless the d'Orléans princes, with the Comte de Paris at their head, repaired to Versailles with the Micawber-like hope that something would turn up, or, if one likes to put it more generously, with the intention to serve their sorely tried country. They themselves were probably at a loss to define the nature of that something, for in spite of their love of money one may charitably absolve them from having fostered the wish to embarrass still further the financial resources of France by a claim for compensation for that part of their confiscated property which had been sold. Still, the fact remains that they did accept such compensation to the tune of nearly one and three-quarter millions sterling. Their adherents have always maintained, and maintain still, that this money was one of the traps set for them by Thiers, the second one being the investiture of the Duc d'Aumale with the presidentship of the court-martial that tried Bazaine. Granted that both statements were true, and that Thiers aimed at making the princes unpopular with the nation, first, by their acceptance of the money, in which he succeeded, secondly, by placing the Duke in a supposedly false position, in which he failed; granted, I say, that both these traps were set, are we to suppose that seven highly intellectual and highly educated princes were not a match in these two instances for what was probably the most clever, because the most unscrupulous and the most selfish, politician of France since Talleyrand, knowing as they did Thiers' character, and especially Louis Philippe's oft and openly expressed dislike and distrust of him?

No, the first trap in particular was set because Thiers felt certain that they would fall into it. Had there been the faintest doubt in his mind on the subject he would not have set it, for the princes' generous refusal of the money would simply have put an end to his own scheme for the continuance of a Republic with himself at the head. For though there is no more rapacious nation on the face of the civilised globe than the French, there is at the same time no nation so apt to be favourably impressed by generosity in money matters. If it be true that Louis Philippe knew Thiers thoroughly, it is equally true that Thiers knew Louis Philippe's descendants to the core, and felt convinced that the offer of so enormous a sum would prove too great a temptation to them. The yielding to it was the first false step on the road which, it was fondly hoped, would lead to the throne, but which simply led back to the Surrey home, whence, like Burns's Satan, 'they had come flying at the cleverly concocted hint of Thiers that France was a-dying.' That first step was worse than a crime, it was a blunder; the subsequent policy was prompted to a great extent by the wish to do things cheaply, both in the way of human life and money, and was marked throughout by lack of dignity, whatever history may say to the contrary.

To begin with, no pressure of his adherents, no persuasion of his uncles, in short, no power on earth should have induced the Comte de Paris to pay that memorable visit to the Comte de Chambord, for the step was in direct contradiction to the principles of his father's political will written expressly for his guidance. Nay, more, that visit was the humiliating recantation of the protest of the d'Orléans family at the time of the birth of the Duc de Berri's posthumous son. Secondly, neither the Comte de Paris nor his relations should have been the assiduous guests of Thiers at the Presidency in Versailles, and least of all should they have formally entertained him, as did the Duc d'Aumale at his mansion in the Faubourg St. Honoré in 1872. Truly, the Comte de Paris was not present at that dinner, which will probably escape the notice of the future historians, inasmuch as the particulars of it are scarcely known outside a very restricted circle; but the reader is probably aware by this time, if he was ignorant of it before, that not only was the Duc d'Aumale considered by every one the guiding spirit of his nephew, but that, for once in a way, public opinion was absolutely correct. Thiers himself, in spite of his gratified vanity, was struck with the awkwardness of the situation, for he never got further than the first words of his little speech alluding to the pleasure he felt at being the honoured guest of the sons of his 'beloved King.' Consummate as had been his assurance throughout his life, it forsook him at that moment, and the rest of the intended compliment stuck in his throat. His marvellous glibness had only failed him on one previous occasion, viz. at his reception as a member of the Académie.

What was the motive of that invitation to Thiers, Mme. Thiers, and the latter's sister, Mlle. Dosne?

Not the mere wish to honour the chief magistrate of France, nor a feeling of personal affection for the private man, we may be sure. The motive was purely political, to which no objection could have been taken under the circumstances but for one fact, and no political necessity, however stringent, ought to have effaced that fact from the mind of Louis Philippe's son even momentarily. Though a year and a half had barely elapsed since Thiers had been elected chief of the executive—as distinct from the Presidency of the Republic, which dignity he only assumed six months later—serious dissensions had already arisen between him and the Chamber, and those who knew the character of the man had no difficulty in foreseeing the upshot of all this in the event of Thiers getting tired of the constant rebellion against his arbitrary authority; for 'constitutional' though he professed to be, there never lived a greater tyrant than Adolphe Thiers. The possibility of his overthrow, and least of all of his voluntary resignation, was not even dreamt of; for, to begin with, in those days Thiers, and Thiers only, was considered 'the liberator of the country'; secondly, every one knew that Thiers would never efface himself of his own free will. 'If M. Thiers had remained in power,' said the late M. Eugène Pelletan, the father of Clémenceau's lieutenant, M. Camille Pelletan, six years later, 'If M. Thiers had remained in power, he, with his great individuality, despotic temperament, and impatience of contradiction, would not have failed to provoke conflicts with the Chamber and given umbrage to many. What would have happened then? I will tell you. One fine morning there would have been this great danger. The former minister of Louis Philippe, finding it impossible to rule the republicans according to his will, to make them dance to his fiddle, feeling himself grow old, and becoming aware that his influence was on the wane, would have brought back the Monarchy among us out of sheer spite.' M. Eugène Pelletan was one of the staunchest and most upright republicans it has been my lot to meet; he was, moreover, a man of wide intellectual attainments, and in these few words he summed up the whole of Thiers' political character and career, from the start to the finish.

The Duc d'Aumale and his brothers, to the full as intelligent as M. Pelletan, had come to the conclusion which the latter expressed six years later; hence the invitation. So far good. But they also knew that a monarchical restoration prepared by Thiers would leave the latter virtually in the same position he occupied before that restoration—under another name. He would simply be the arbitrary Premier of the Monarch instead of the arbitrary President of the Republic; or, if unable to attain and maintain that position, he would conspire for the overthrow of that monarchy as he had conspired before. Louis Philippe was an usurper, without the daring the lawlessness and the grandeur of an usurper. He was a good king, though not an ideal one; but he was, above all, an excellent father to his sons, and his lack of the qualities which make a sovereign beloved of his people was mainly due to his ever constant anxiety to provide for these sons. The impartial onlooker may blame this, but the sons had no right to forget it for one single instant, and least of all had they the right to expose their nephew to the vexatious control of the unscrupulous, self-seeking politician who had proved a thorn in their father's side for eighteen weary years; they had no right to 'compound' with a man who, if not absolutely guilty of the overthrow of their father, did nothing to prevent that overthrow, which he might have prevented by accepting the portfolio Louis Philippe offered him on the evening of the 23rd February '48. Louis Philippe subsequently admitted that he was a fool for his pains. I am quoting his own words. 'I was virtually like the man who appeals to a so-called friend to prevent a divorce between himself and his wife, while the friend is only bent upon one thing—to marry the woman the moment she is free from the other.' To continue the simile for a moment. The d'Orléans princes had no right to take back that woman, when Thiers was momentarily tired of her, in order to yoke her to their nephew, while Thiers himself would have claimed and perhaps kept over her the ascendency which men often claim and keep over a cast-off mistress, after they have succeeded in transferring her to an honest, but too gullible, husband. They had no right to do what Louis Napoleon declined to do, namely, to truckle to Thiers; for truckling is the only word to use.

Truly, their position in '72 was different from that of the future Emperor between '48 and '51. They had not the army at their back as the son of Hortense had, for in 1872 the Duc d'Aumale had not as yet been appointed to the command of the 7th Corps d'Armée. But intrigue for intrigue, it would have argued more grandeur of conception on their part to corrupt a dozen generals than to conciliate a Thiers. To speak plainly, I am not at all certain that the idea of doing this did not present itself to their minds; but, to speak more plainly still, the material cost frightened them. I am bound to admit that their first experiment in that direction was not calculated to encourage them much. General Comte d'Andlau, upon whom the experiment was tried, was not a promising Saint-Arnaud. It may be remembered that d'Andlau was compelled to fly from France subsequently, in consequence of his having been implicated in the Caffarel scandal. He died eighteen months or two years ago in one of the South American republics. Louis Napoleon, in virtue of his position as President of the Republic, was enabled to dispense favours; there was also the magic of his name. Those who were willing, perhaps, to listen to the d'Orléans princes may have remembered the words of La Fontaine:—

> 'Amour est mort,
> En beaux louis se content les fleurettes';

and I repeat, the material cost of corruption frightened the princes. They were, moreover, disinclined to shed the blood of their countrymen, even when, as I have already observed, an enormous force was practically at their command. One day a French officer was describing the battle of Mentana to Napoleon III. 'I made a prisoner, sire,' said the narrator; 'and he turned out to be an old acquaintance from the Boulevards. He was furious against Garibaldi for having imposed upon him the necessity of firing on his (the prisoner's) own countrymen in a foreign land. "I am not an *émigré*," said the prisoner; "I would not have gone to Coblenz; I am a Frenchman from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. If it were a question of fighting Frenchmen in the streets of Paris, I would not mind it. I would have no scruple to shoot down either the rabble or the Imperial Guards, for that would be civil war." That 's what he said, sire,' wound up the Emperor's interlocutor. The Emperor nodded his head, and with his wonderful sphinx-like smile, replied, 'Your prisoner was right, it makes all the difference.' The sons and grandsons of Louis Philippe, in despite of their unquestioned bravery, tacitly professed their inability to evolve such subtle distinctions from their own consciousness, or to act upon them if suggested by others. The blood of their countrymen was as sacred to them in the streets of Paris as on the battlefield, and this, I fear, is not understood even by the most educated of Frenchmen. France, in fact, has always been like the Brunhild of the 'Nibelungen': she must be roughly handled before she will yield her love, and above all her respect.

Such rough usage the d'Orléans princes shrank from giving; they were under the impression that France might be won by sonnets in the shape of manifestoes; they forgot what George Eliot implied with regard to women, that they prefer propinquity, not to say juxtaposition, to any number of love-poems. And France is essentially a woman. Through having forgotten this, a virtuous prince, admirable in every private relation of life, descended to his grave a mere pretender, and a very platonic one at that, instead of dying on the throne of his ancestors.

XI

THE SPY MANIA AND THE REVANCHE IDEA

When the curtain fell on the first performance of Sardou's *Dora*, a more convincing spy-drama than Dumas' *Femme de Claude*, the audience, with the exception of a few French and foreign critics and a sprinkling of seasoned men of the world, felt convinced that the author had placed his finger on the plague-spot that threatened to destroy once more the quickly reorganising military strength of France. Neither the thin disguise of the *dramatis personae*, nor the transparent device of making the action hinge on the theft of despatches of supreme interest to Austria rather than to Germany, blinded the spectators to the real drift of the play. It was a warning against the native and foreign spies among them, spies of both sexes, but especially female ones, and therefore all the more dangerous, in virtue of the natural means of seduction at their command.

The dramatist appealed to willing listeners, for no nation can suddenly wrench herself loose from traditions at least a couple of centuries old; and it is no exaggeration to say that in no European country, save perhaps in Italy under the rule of Austria, did 'espionage in all its branches' play as great a part as in

France. The story of the 'institution' in the latter country—there is no other word for it—would fill a big book. To go back no further than Richelieu, we find a perfect network of espionage, of which 'son éminence grise,' otherwise 'le père Joseph, l'âme damnée' of the great cardinal, held the strings. Not only was it cast all over the land, but it had its ramifications beyond the frontiers, and so well did it work throughout as to produce the proofs of Cinq-Mars' conspiracy with Spain against Louis XIII.'s Prime Minister before the chief plotter was aware of being 'shadowed.' Mazarin was probably less generous with his rewards to his tools than his predecessor, but he was equally well served by them. Long before his death the axiom of another Italian, his contemporary Strada, to the effect that 'spies constitute the eyes and ears of those who aspire to govern,' had become a fixed principle with the practical ruler of France during the minority of Louis XIV. The principle was not lost sight of by the young monarch when he himself assumed the conduct of his own affairs. His lieutenants of police, whose functions he was the first clearly to define, and notably La Reynie, the first bearer of the title, who distinguished himself so signally in the unravelling of the 'poison mysteries,' in which even Mme. de Montespan was said to be implicated, not only improved upon the tactics of Richelieu and Mazarin at home, but flung spies and counter-spies abroad in every direction. Clever as those lieutenants were, one of their successors under Louis XV., Sartines, could have given all of them many valuable lessons; Berryer, who came after him, was not inferior; Fouché and his satellites, such as Desmarets, fully upheld the honour of their craft, and by the time Louis XVIII. was seated on the throne of his ancestors, the spy and counter-spy constituted as much a part and parcel of the Government as its ministers and its diplomatic agents and ambassadors.

The system had become too ingrained to be even momentarily abandoned, let alone entirely abolished, by the succeeding dynasty; and the most austere, and at the same time the most honest, of Louis Philippe's ministers, *i.e.* Guizot, was compelled, in spite of his reluctance, to follow the beaten path, in order not to be caught napping by his scrupulous and ever wide-awake opponent Thiers. I do not positively assert that Esther Guimont, a kind of second-rate Aspasia of the Citizen Monarchy, had a direct and clearly defined mission of espionage, but several of her letters to Guizot prove beyond a doubt that at least on one occasion she was engaged in very delicate negotiations in behalf of the Government with certain journalists of the Opposition; while her salon—save the mark!—in the middle of the forties was looked upon in the light of a political centre. We have still more conclusive evidence that Thiers, whether in or out of office, never lost sight of his adversaries, or, for the matter of that, of his supporters, whom he probably considered it as necessary to watch as the others; for in political France of the past as of the present the German proverb held and holds good, that 'the host trusts his guests according to his own code of honesty'; *anglicé*, that he measures their corn by his bushel. Thiers was an arch-plotter all his life; his imagination failed to conceive a statesman *who did not plot*; hence 'spying' was from the beginning of his career to the end the lever of his political machinery. He spied upon Cavaignac and Lamoricière as he had spied upon Guizot, Molé, and Louis Philippe himself; he spied upon Changarnier and Prince Louis Napoleon as the latter spied upon him. In short, there is not a period of French history, from the advent to power of Armand Jean du Plessis to the hour in which these lines are written, in which the spy—no matter under what form or denomination—did not work his evil ways and did not contribute to the lowering of the political as well as moral standard of the Government, and through it to the abasement of the nation's self-respect.

For, Strada's axiom notwithstanding, no Government can resort to a system of habitual, methodical, and far-reaching espionage without being defiled by it, because the logical corollary to the one system is the establishing of a second, a system of counter-espionage; and the latter practice represents the lowest possible solution of the problem, 'Who is to guard your own guards?' Montesquieu went to the core of the evil when he said that 'espionage might be made tolerable if it were exercised by honest people.' The spy is always a *déclassé*. Take him or her from whatever section of society you will, a moment's inquiry will elicit the fact that he or she had done something to forfeit his or her position in that section before he or she became the 'creature' of this or that minister. The speck on the character may be invisible to the world at large. Be sure that it exists; for no minister or his recruiting agent, not even the recruiting agent of a Cavour or a Bismarck, were he as unscrupulous and as sceptical about people's honour as these two were said to be, would dare to offer a mission of that kind to any man or woman with a clean record, were they never so poor. Of course, I am speaking of the so-called higher spheres of political espionage which Sardou's piece professed to illustrate; and, in proof of my contention, I may be permitted to point out that the author himself took special pains to insist upon this loss of caste in the case of his three principal female figures.[1] So little respect do the two alleged spies, the Marquise de Rio-Zares and her daughter Dora, inspire to their male familiars, that one of these, the Wallachian Stramine, almost openly offers the girl to become his mistress. We are inferentially given to understand that it is not the first offer of a similar nature, by the behaviour of Dora herself, who, though sincerely loving André de Maurillac, and feeling practically certain of his affection, is afraid to meet him lest there should be a repetition of the scene with Stramine. As for Countess Zicka, the real spy, and convicted as such at the termination of the piece, there is not as much as an attempt on Sardou's part to conceal the truth. We are plainly told that she springs from the scum of London, and that she owes her actual position and title to the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prince Paulnitz, who opened the prison doors to her when she was arrested and condemned in Vienna as an accomplice of her paramour Zicky on a charge of forgery. Paulnitz provided her with money and a handle to her usurped name, and sent her to Paris to operate under the direction of Baron Van der Kraft.

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[1] I am throughout referring to the original, not to the English version, called *Diplomacy*, which I saw once, and the action of which, altered as it was to give it an English colouring, seemed to me even more improbable, not to say impossible, than the other.

The way she did operate would, in real life, have led to her instant dismissal by such a supposedly 'cool-hand' as Van der Kraft, *i.e.* if he had allowed her to attempt the abstraction of the important despatch from the writing-table of André, with her bodice, gloves, and the whole of her dress reeking with a scent so powerful as to cling to everything she had touched, besides pervading the atmosphere of the room for hours after she had left it. It was a device borrowed from one of the stories of Balzac, who, however, had used it under far different circumstances. The only theory upon which one could excuse such a blundering on the part of Van der Kraft was that he, being a Dutchman, as his name implied, the smells of his native canals had vitiated his olfactory organs to such a degree as to render them impervious to any other exhalations. This explained at the same time the subtle choice of the name by the author, although that of a dweller on the banks of the Liffey would have answered as well.

Be this as it may, the public, which for months crowded the Vaudeville from floor to ceiling, were not disposed to carp at such trifles. They had swallowed the rhetorical flummery, and second-hand flummery at that, of Jules Favre and Gambetta; they had applauded the 'Not a stone of our fortresses, not an inch of our territory' of the former, and the 'pact either with victory or with death' of the latter; they were not likely to strain at a cock-and-bull story, presented to them, moreover, with all the resources of a first-class cast, and which, at any rate, had the advantage of certainly one portrait, the original of which was known to everybody. It was an open secret that the drawing-room of Princess Bariatine was meant for that of Princess Lise Troubezkoi, who, a few years previously, had invariably been present at the sittings of the National Assembly at Versailles, whenever Thiers spoke. She was by no means the only habituée. An expected speech from Gambetta was sure to bring Mme. Edmond Adam (Juliette Lamber), the editor of the *Nouvelle Revue*, to the scene, while Mmes. de Renneville and d'Harcourt were even more assiduous in their attendance. After a while, though, the princess was politely informed that 'her room was preferable to her company,' and not long after that she closed her salon 'at the advice of sincere friends.'

I said just now 'a nation cannot suddenly wrench herself loose from traditions at least a couple of centuries old.' I did not write at random. Princess Troubezkoi's ostracism occurred three or four years after the third invasion of France. Among my old and almost forgotten notes I find the record of a similar incident that happened in the Chamber of 1820, hence five years after the second invasion. I quote from the anonymous portraitist to whose name I have no clue whatsoever, but whose identity it would not be difficult to discover. In this instance the original was also a Russian princess, who 'for the last two years has not missed a single sitting. Each day she wears a fresh toilette and ornaments; she is not averse to being told that she is good-looking; her figure and manners are out of the common, and evidently aim at being original. She is fair, pale, and uses no rouge; her complexion is of that peculiar whiteness which is only seen among the beautiful women of the North. . . . Her assiduous presence at the legislative debates has given rise to the rumour of her being charged with a diplomatic mission by the Emperor of Russia. If this be the case, the pretty Russian princess appears to act somewhat in the manner of the irregular Cossacks who carry on war on their own account. We doubt if she renders an account of all her conquests to the monarch, and we do not believe that the interests of the Emperor are the only matters she stipulates for in her interviews with the ambassador of a great power, who is just as assiduous as she at the sittings of the Chamber, whose eyes do not cease watching her for a moment, and who takes her in his carriage from her home to the Chamber and from the Chamber to her home. Unless it be a question of a treaty of alliance, both offensive and defensive, between them, we are really at a loss to say what there is.' The portrait was unquestionably flattering, but it effected its purpose: it drove the original from the Chamber.

I am not aware that this particular story was told at the time of Princess Troubezkoi's exclusion, but I should not wonder if it did appear somewhere, for, to give the Paris journalist his due, he is a past-master in the art of unearthing anecdotes of yore in order pertinently to illustrate events of the day. As a rule, he gleans in the byways of history rather than in its beaten tracks, and he reminds one of Voltaire's *mot* about Marivaux's portrayal of the tender passion. 'He scours the bridle-paths of love and severely avoids the high road.' The journalist has his reward, for his readers readily partake of the 'snacks' offered to them while they would probably decline more solid and perhaps tougher meats. And a good many of those readers remember those *bonnes bouches* at the right moment, although the reminiscence of the savours may have become a little mixed in the course of time.

It was not surprising, then, that during the run of *Dora* those recollections should have formed the staple topic of general conversation; and that Marion de Lorme, Louise de Kérouailles, Esther Guimont, the Countesses de Castiglione and de Gardonne, and Princess Lise Troubezkoi were indiscriminately cited in proof of Sardou's honesty in constructing his piece. He had not exaggerated, still less invented; he had utilised facts, known to a select few perhaps, but nevertheless facts, which, on the contrary, he had probably toned down in deference to the request of the authorities, lest they should become involved in renewed complications with the hereditary foe, ever on the watch for a pretext to force another war upon the French. This was the commonly received opinion, based solely on the anecdotal parallels of the boulevardier-chroniclers *plus* a slight incident previous to the production of the play, namely, its change of title. The Government had no doubt suggested the alteration, and *les Espionnes* became *Dora*. In vain did an infinitesimal minority—mostly Frenchmen, for even the best-known foreigners scarcely dared to join in the controversy—protest against this mania, which was fast becoming endemic, with all the arguments that common-sense could suggest; the arguments produced not the slightest effect, and the would-be moderators might consider themselves fortunate if they were not openly denounced as confederates, or at any rate as abettors, of the 'emissaries of Bismarck.' Emile de Girardin had to face such an accusation in the Chamber; while Beckmann, Max Nordau, and other correspondents of the foremost German papers were made the daily targets for the most abominable insults, and practically went about with their lives in their hands. At that time I had already been living permanently in London for several years; it was only five years later that I took up my residence once more in Paris, although I never gave up my home here. During the whole of the seventies, however, I crossed the Channel frequently and always stayed at the same hotel. For nearly a quarter of a century I have never stayed elsewhere while on a visit to Paris. In spite of this the proprietor had on two different occasions to bear the severe cross-examination of an inspector of the 'service spécial des garnis.' The first time he wanted to know why my name was so conspicuously like that of the son of the Postmaster-General of the Second Empire (M. Albert Vandal); the next time he was anxious to ascertain if I was a distant or near connection of the famous General Vandamme; although, in both cases, he could see for himself that the name on the register was spelt quite differently from theirs. The manager, not a Frenchman, pointed this out to him, adding that a man like myself was probably competent to spell his own name, and that if he, the inspector, wished for more ample information he could apply either to the English Embassy, an English banker on the Boulevard des Italiens (since deceased), or any of the English correspondents in Paris, at all of which places I was known. The official's retort was characteristic of the spirit of the time, as showing the value he, and presumably his superiors, placed upon all testimony, affecting no matter whom, which did not tally with their jaundiced views. 'We do not believe in embassies and bankers, and still less in foreign correspondents,' he said. 'The most shady people have, as a rule, the best credentials.' The latter sentence was, no doubt, based upon certain, though by no means conclusive experience arrived at by the higher functionaries of the Prefecture of Police. It had been rehearsed, perhaps many a time and oft, for the inspector's benefit, inasmuch as it had become a stereotyped phrase with nearly every one of the second and third-rate newspapers. The inspector, though, was too stupid to invert the proposition for himself, hence in his mind the people provided with the best credentials were the most shady.

I had not the pleasure of an interview with the inspector, and it was only some months later that I learned, quite by accident, the cause of the police's anxious inquiries about myself. The first inquiry was due to the fact that when in London I was often seen in the company of former members of the Commune, and notably in that of Jules Vallès; and when in Paris I was hand in glove, not to say cheek by jowl, both with Imperialists and Germans.

The second inquiry had been provoked by something more actively reprehensible on my part than habitually friendly intercourse with suspected adversaries of the existing régime. After seeing Sardou's piece I had ventured to express an unfavourable opinion of it, not as a stage-play, but as a 'human document.' This was at the Café de la Paix, whither I went to meet some friends at the end of the performance. However reluctant, I feel bound to give the scene in detail, in order to let the reader judge of the enormity of my offence. I not only contended that spies would not act as Sardou caused them to act, but expressed a doubt whether it was worth the trouble and expense of any Government to maintain spies at all, and especially in such large numbers as Bismarck was credited with doing. I repeat, I was among friends, all three Frenchmen, who had known me for many years. My remarks were received with good-natured scepticism, but not without contradiction. 'You are not living in Paris, and have not been living here since the war; therefore you cannot judge,' said one. 'We are surrounded by spies: foreign ones subsidised by their respective Governments, and native ones to spy upon them and upon us also, if the fancy takes them. We do not mind the latter, we only mind the former. What if I told you that on the night the Opéra in the Rue le Peletier was burned down a Prussian spy was among the crowd. You may well look surprised.' I did not look surprised, but let him go on. 'But for his wrist being hurt by a piece of incandescent wood, such as fell in all directions within a score of yards, no one would have been the wiser for his presence, but the people insisted on taking him to the Ambulance of the Mairie of the Rue Dronot, and then he was obliged to give his name and address. He was a Prussian officer.' 'But a Prussian officer, on a visit to Paris, is not necessarily a spy,' I observed. 'Not necessarily a spy?' echoed my friend; 'then what did he want in that crowd?' 'If I had been in Paris I should have probably been there too,' I answered. 'Ah, that's different; you are not a Prussian officer.' And all my arguments notwithstanding, I failed to convince him that any chance visitor to Paris, whether French or foreign, would have gone to the scene of the disaster, if within a short distance of it, as the Prussian officer probably had been. Of course there were people sitting around, but I did not for a moment imagine that our conversation, even if overheard, would lead them to suspect me as a spy. Yet that was the case. I had taken up the cudgels for a spy—for they quite agreed with my friend that the Prussian officer could have been nothing else,—hence I also was a spy. They not only followed me to my hotel, not more than a hundred and fifty yards distant from the Café de la Paix, but returned to the latter the next day, and tried to 'pump' the head-waiter about my friends, whom they, the inquirers, rightly surmised to be habitués. The head-waiter declined to be 'pumped,' and suggested that the questions should be put personally to the objects of them, which suggestion was evidently not to their taste, for the café knew them no more.

I need not and cannot pursue the diagnosis of the spy-mania day by day. It was absolutely fed by every section of the community, and especially by those who ought to have been the first to discourage it. I am writing from memory, but fancy I may trust to it. During the whole of 1877 the Prefecture of Police was governed by M. Fébère Voisin, who had 'Prussians on the brain,' because he had been 'fortunate enough' to be imprisoned for twenty-four or forty-eight hours by the invaders of Melun, where he was Procureur-Impérial. I say 'fortunate,' for without this incident or accident in his career he would never have been elected to the National Assembly, or been exalted as a martyr by the Republic. Buffet made him Prefect of Police. Like the majority of that quasi-hereditary caste—

starched, pompous, narrow-minded, and standing more aloof from the ordinary world even than the priest—from which the French judiciary was and is still recruited, M. Voisin held the 'woman of the world,' in the best sense of the term, in abomination. She did not realise the patterns of wifely and filial submission among which he had been brought up, and one of which he had probably married, for this quasi-hereditary caste intermarries largely. Those wives, mothers, and sisters of judges, procureurs-généraux, and the rest, are utterly different from the bulk of their French sisters; they dare not call their souls their own, their lives are spent in the most restricted circle. They can, however, scheme and plot with the best or worst, when it becomes a question of advancing their mankind, but it is at their command they do this; they rarely, if ever, go 'free-lancing.'

About a couple of months after the first performance of Sardou's play there appeared in the presidential box of Versailles a young, good-looking, and elegant woman, who seemingly watched the proceedings of the Chamber with great and undivided interest. There was not a particle of evidence to show that the new-comer was less fit to enjoy the privilege of M. Jules Grévy's hospitality than his other female guests, for inquiries elicited the fact that no less a personage than Gambetta himself was responsible for her introduction there. Yet at her second visit those fellow-guests pointedly held aloof from her, and the next day they deserted the box *en masse*. M. Voisin, on his own responsibility, had sent down a couple of his officials, who ostentatiously perambulated the lobby leading to the presidential box during the whole of the sitting. There was no fourth visit of the stranger, but Sardou was freely—too freely—quoted in the comments of Parisian society on the incident. According to the knowing ones, M. Voisin's way was the only sensible one to get rid of those 'confounded spies in petticoats.' When asked for proof of Gambetta's acquaintance being a spy, the answer might have been copied from that of my friend of the Café de la Paix: 'What should she want in the Chamber if she were not a spy?'

Nevertheless the disease, practically begotten of Sardou's piece, although the predisposing causes were there, did not burst forth in all its virulence until nearly three years later. In the early part of 1880 three Parisian journals—the *Gil-Blas*, the *Gaulois*, and *Paris Journal*—announced, simultaneously, that important documents relating to the mobilisation of the army and the defence of the frontiers had been extracted from the War Office and sold to the Germans by a French officer. The name of the culprit was at first withheld, but not for long. In its next issue the *Gaulois* boldly charged Colonel (now General) Jung, attached to the General Staff of the War Office, with the offence, and his accuser, M. Ivan de Woestyne, did not even attempt to shield himself behind the veil of anonymity, but appended his signature to the article. Thereupon M. Jung sent his seconds to the writer, who refused to accept the challenge 'until a jury of honour had proclaimed the innocence of the challenger.' We are not concerned with M. de Woestyne here; although, if the modern duel is to be looked upon in the light of a 'trial by combat,' the refusal could not be justified on the plea of logic, and still less according to the dictates of chivalry. I do not share the prejudices of most Englishmen against 'all duelling'—I repeat 'all duelling'—and am not prepared to modify my opinion in deference to those prejudices. The proof that M. de Woestyne was not actuated in his refusal by the reason alleged lies in the fact of his having persisted in it after a jury of honour had cleared Colonel Jung of the charge preferred against him by one who was, after all, not a responsible authority. Then M. de Woestyne shifted his ground, and enacted the part of the wolf in his controversy with the lamb. 'If Colonel Jung is not guilty,' wrote M. de Woestyne; 'can the same be averred of his entourage?' And this sentence brings me once more to Sardou, whom, at the risk of wearying the reader, I must not lose sight of in the description of the principal sidelight of the revanche idea. All the other sidelights have, if not altogether disappeared, at any rate been obscured; the spy-mania, which he more than any one contributed to fan into a blaze, burns as fiercely as ever at present. Dora de Rio-Zares, who, on the day she becomes Mme. de Maurillac, is suddenly confronted with an almost irrefutable charge of espionage, had found her counterpart in real life this time, 'and the affair in this instance could neither be hushed up nor its secret confined to a few persons. If this was not the most conclusive proof of the virtual truth of Sardou's story, what more convincing evidence could be forthcoming?'

Thus said the wiseacres, who, almost without exception, were also the greatest sufferers from the spy-mania. On the face of it, it was difficult to contradict them, for forty-eight hours after, or perhaps before M. de Woestyne's paragraph about Colonel Jung's entourage appeared, it was pretty well known all over Paris that the drama to be unfolded in real life was constructed in accordance with most rigid canons of stage-craft, as exemplified by the art of plot-weaving and subsequent unravelling of the greatest masters. The apparent criminal was indeed the innocent victim; the real villain was Colonel Jung's wife, who had decoyed into her meshes her husband's superior, a septuagenarian General and former Minister for War, the then Commander of the 11th Army Corps, Ernest Comtot de Cissey. Unlike the hero and heroine of *Dora*, Colonel Jung and his wife had, however, lived apart for many years; she was known to a certain section of society under her maiden name, De Kaulla, to which, rightly or wrongly, she had added the title of 'baroness.' Like every 'espionne du grand monde,' responding throughout to the necessities of her rôle, she was supposed to be endowed with 'une beauté troublante, sombre et fatale,' which was not at all true. I had often seen her at the 'Librairie Nouvelle' on the Boulevard des Italiens, and she had simply impressed me as an uncommonly good-looking, elegant woman, with splendid eyes and an exceedingly sweet smile. Like Dora and Countess Zicka, she was a foreigner.

It would take too long to go into every detail of the affair, which, to those in their sober senses, looked like an enormous mystification and huge farce instead of a drama. In the first place the 'important documents,' alleged to be missing, must have been abstracted at least two years previously to the discovery of their loss, for the alarm to that effect was given in April 1880, and Cissey had been at Nantes since 31st March 1878. It did not argue much vigilance on the part of those responsible for the safe custody of those 'important documents' not to have missed them before, consequently their vaunted importance appears more than doubtful. In the second place, why should they have been permanently abstracted at all? A copy of them would have answered every purpose, and if Cissey or any one was beguiled by Mme. de Kaulla into furnishing her with such a copy, 'either for love or money,' the originals would have been replaced with the shortest possible delay. In spite of this very elementary logic, three papers made it their special business to hound Cissey down day after day, and Farre, his immediate successor at the War Office, practically agreed with them by depriving Cissey of his command. I need not say that *L'Intransigeant* was the foremost of these baiters. Cissey brought an action for libel against all three, and got a verdict with damages in his favour. To prove his innocence up to the hilt, he petitioned for the appointment of a parliamentary commission to inquire even more fully into the matter. The latter confirmed the previous verdict, adding, as a rider, that though irregularities had no doubt been committed at the War Office, they were virtually inherent to the system and not confined to any particular period. They had occurred before, during, and after Cissey's tenure of the portfolio of war.

No one, therefore, was specially to blame, and least of all the general in question, but the Commission would draw the attention of the Committee for the next war budget to those abuses, so that it might suggest measures for the future prevention of them, etc. etc. The great drama in real life, which promised to rival, if not to surpass in intensity, the one unfolded on the Vaudeville stage, had fizzled out, as was foreseen by the few people of sense; but the legend of the stolen documents remains to this day, for the majority would not be convinced to the contrary. It flattered their national craving for military glory and supremacy to think that, a decade after their terrible disasters, their captains had so far advanced in knowledge as to make their plans the object of the closest watchfulness on the part of the leaders of other nations. This flattering unction has lost none of its effect, whether it be applied to the highest or lowest of Frenchmen; and ever and anon it is thickly laid on by the quickly succeeding batches of adventurers, who, especially since the retirement of MacMahon, have resumed their sway over France, as the first batch established it from the 4th September 1870 to the capitulation of Paris and the election of the

National Assembly. On the other hand, the arrogance which distinguished some of the most incapable carpet warriors, as well as the swashbucklers of the Second Empire, has scarcely abated. They would fain persuade the French nation that Germany or Italy, or perhaps both, are keeping up a system of espionage at all costs, in order to checkmate France's military strength at the crucial hour, whenever it may strike.

I am not prepared to say that this military strength is an absolute fiction. I only wish to point out that between 1866 (the conclusion of the Prusso-Austrian Campaign) and the declaration of the Franco-German War, four years later, similar statements were constantly put forward. However much the outer world may have believed in these roseate accounts, they deceived neither Nigra or Metternich, and least of all Goltz and his successor Werther, respectively representing the three powers most interested at the time in France's foreign policy, and consequently in her armaments in support of that policy. Long before the truth of France's deplorable weakness burst upon the world at large the Cabinets of Turin, Vienna, and Berlin—or rather the War departments of those administrations — had pierced through the veil of France's gorgeous military pageants and seen the abominable military nakedness behind; and the knowledge was not obtained through spies. The real state of things had been blurted out before Napoleon III., and in the presence of the Austrian Ambassador, by Marshal Randon, on the evening of Sadowa. Need we look for any other clues than that one for Austria's and Italy's procrastination, prevarication, hesitation, or final refusal—call it what you will—to throw in their lot with France in July 1870? Did it require spies to inform their employers of the hopelessness of the Emperor's attempts to reform the army after Sadowa? Was not the determined opposition of the majority of the Legislature to the Emperor's scheme, and the latter's acceptance of a miserable makeshift for his original plan, sufficient to determine, beforehand, the effect of one serious military defeat on the whole of France? And would not a man of abilities far inferior to those of Bismarck have become cognisant from that moment of the exact power of resistance of France's future chain of defence? He had only to read the newspapers. No spy or military attaché could have supplied more ample information.

This was during the Second Empire, with a partly, if not wholly, controlled press. Since the nominal and virtual establishment of the Third Republic the pretensions of that press to be put in possession of the most trifling, as of the most important, matters affecting the national defence have exceeded all reasonable bounds. The political adventurers and swaggering generals connected with almost every succeeding French Cabinet under the new régime have not only admitted those claims, but gone out of their way to meet them by voluntary revelations calculated to redound to their credit, or to that of their party. More often it was a sop to a too troublesome scribe with a knowledge of their biography. A revelation of this kind from a momentarily conspicuous personage means both money and prestige to the recipient of it. He gets special rates for his article, and begets a reputation for being able to worm out secrets, while in reality he has been levying a kind of journalistic blackmail. I have not the exact date of a bill, introduced by M. de Freycinet, for transforming a main railway-line with the view of accelerating the operations of mobilisation in time of war; I am under the impression that it was placed before the Chamber in December 1888; but I defy the most technically accomplished military spy to give a more lucid account of it than that given by *Le Figaro.* The military attaché of the German Embassy must have blessed the writer of that article, who saved him an immense amount of trouble.

Astonished as I was at this utter want of reticence on the part of a minister, and at the general *insouciance* of the whole of the nation at seeing their game explained before the first card of it was played, my astonishment was as nothing to that experienced a couple of months later. In February 1889 Boulanger was at the height of his popularity, and Mr. Stuart Cumberland, the well-known 'thought-reader,' being in Paris at that moment, conceived the idea of trying his powers on 'le brav' général.' Mr. Cumberland does not speak French, and I acted as his interpreter; I had done the same on several previous occasions. The gathering was a private one, at the house of the Comte de Dillon, at Neuilly. After various absolutely successful experiments Mr. Cumberland proposed to read the general's thoughts in connection with a possible next war with Germany. To be perfectly correct, he offered to guide the general's hand, holding a pencil, along the line of invasion decided upon by the French generalissimo. The offer was accepted; they both sat down at a table with a large map spread out before them, Mr. Cumberland blindfolded, and with Boulanger's fingers clasping the said pencil between his own. The pencil travelled very slowly from Paris to the frontier, but in a few minutes, after crossing the French borders, it went quicker, until it finally stopped. 'This is the point you would make for?' said Mr. Cumberland. 'That 's right,' answered Boulanger, 'I would make for Stuttgart.'

Now, I am not libelling the dead in saying that Boulanger was incapable of elaborating a plan of campaign, and, least of all, a plan of campaign evincing some strategical originality. I there and then came to the conclusion that he was strutting in other people's feathers, and that he had given away, from sheer vanity, a design that might have succeeded in virtue of that originality. He had, no doubt, had access to many different programmes when Minister of War, and it struck him that the fathering of this one was calculated to establish his reputation as a Moltke among his familiars. I was wondering what the real Moltke, or one of his principal collaborators, would have said to a similar proposition from Mr. Cumberland. It was a private gathering; and, as such, it would have been an insult to every one present to harbour the suspicion of a spy being among them. Boulanger and his host must have been well aware, though, that Mr. Cumberland was a public entertainer, not a *dilettante*, and that he was not likely to hide his light under a bushel in view of the enormous advertisement the publication of the soirée's particulars would give him. Boulanger knew, moreover, that I was a journalist; he had seen me at work before; I had arranged the whole affair, in accordance with Mr. Cumberland's wishes, and certainly not in any private capacity. I was, therefore, not bound to secrecy. I am also certain that no such secrecy was expected from either of us; for when my account appeared the next day but one in the *Gaulois*, not the faintest objection was raised by Boulanger or his friends. I think they felt rather pleased at their *coqueluche* being advertised in this apparently spontaneous manner as a presumably past-master of strategy. And thus, without the aid of any spy, Germany found herself in the possession of a piece of information which no attaché could have procured, and which she might pocket for future reference. For Germany had taken Boulanger's measure long before that, and knew, as well as I did, that this plan of campaign, supposed to be his, was probably registered at the French War Office under a very different name.

For years not a single foreign spy has been caught in France, while, on the other hand, two French ones were caught in Germany, besides an Alsatian woman at Metz. Wilhelm II. commuted the sentences of the former, if I remember rightly, at Carnot's tragic death. Nevertheless France continues to suffer from the spy-mania, and we have seen what it has led to, and I can but repeat the remark made at the beginning of this paper. When a nation has been afflicted with acute spy-mania for a number of years, she resorts, instinctively, to the supposed remedy of counter-espionage. Guizot, whose writings were even more well-weighed than his mere verbal utterances, has plainly told us that the road between the spy and the *agent provocateur* is short and easy of descent. How much shorter and easier of descent that road is between the counter-spy and the *agent provocateur* need not be pointed out after the Esterhazy trial. It is the most lurid of all the side-lights of the revanche idea; so lurid, in fact, as to defy extinguishing, except at the risk of morally swamping military France.

XII

‘THE KING OF THE JOURNALISTS’

Lanfrey, commenting on the duel between Emile de Girardin and Armand Carrel, which cost the latter his life, said that it had been a case of practical journalism killing chivalrous journalism with a bullet. This epigrammatic statement, like many others by the well-known historian of Napoleon III., must be accepted with a good deal of reservation, although there is little doubt that Girardin's scheme of journalism, of which *La Presse* was the outcome, contained an essentially practical idea, and that, on the other hand, Carrel enjoyed the reputation of being exceedingly Quixotic in every relation of life. The question that caused Carrel's death was, however, not one either of practical or chivalrous journalism; no principle of ethics or politics was involved in the short controversy that sprang up between these two men. It was a commonplace, not to say vulgar, question of £ s. d., with which Carrel ought not to have meddled under any circumstances, and with which Girardin would not have meddled but for his being the nominal proprietor as well as the editor of the journal he had planned. Let us imagine an analogous case at home. In 1855 the late Mr.

J. M. Levy reduced the *Daily Telegraph* to one penny per copy. It was a bold innovation which probably did not commend itself to the proprietors of other and higher-priced papers. Supposing, however, that, on the pretext of examining the financial possibilities of the new venture, the latter had not only attacked the venture itself but cast aspersions on the private character of Mr. Levy, would he not have been perfectly justified in appealing to the law against his traducers? Unquestionably; and if, while this action was pending, another editor who had hitherto kept aloof from the controversy had suddenly stepped in and inferentially charged the plaintiff with a 'want of loyalty,' because, instead of defending himself in his paper, he had carried his grievances before the judges of the land, would Mr. Levy have been to blame for retorting in the same strain and for questioning the loyalty of his assailant? If, finally, an encounter had taken place in consequence of all this, in which encounter the aggressive editor had fallen, would it be just to say that progressive and cheap journalism had killed belated and costly journalism with a bullet?

The real affair differed but slightly from the imaginary one I have just sketched. In the early part of 1836 there appeared in Paris the prospectus of a forthcoming political and literary daily paper which, while promising to maintain a high degree of excellence in its editorial department, was offered at half the annual subscription, viz. forty francs, of the then existing journals. The figures showing how this promise was to be realised have since then become the simple alphabet of vast journalistic enterprise; but then, as now, the public had no concern with them, and least of all the editors of contemporaries. The public invited to subscribe could comply with or decline the request; the editors were entitled to discuss the political and literary programme of the new-comer; they could accord it a cordial welcome or ignore its advent; a discussion of its administrative particulars and resources was absolutely beyond their province. This line of controversial demarcation is scarcely understood at present in France; sixty years ago it was not understood at all, or, if understood, tacitly disregarded. The prospectus, then, was unanimously assailed; and when, on the 1st July, the paper itself appeared, the attacks not only increased in virulence, but degenerated into personal abuse of its founder and guiding spirit, although it seemed odd that another paper which appeared on the same day at the same price, and was absolutely begotten of the selfsame financial idea, should have practically aroused no hostility at all. I am alluding to *Le Siècle*, the principal promoter of which, Dutacq, after having unsuccessfully offered to share Girardin's enterprise, endeavoured to take the wind out of Girardin's sails by forestalling *La Presse.* Whether it was Girardin's superior energy that frustrated Dutacq's design, or whether the latter purposely delayed bringing out *Le Siècle* until *La Presse* was ready, in order to let it bear the brunt of the onslaught, will probably never be known. If Dutacq fostered the latter intention he succeeded admirably, for though the papers, as I have said, appeared simultaneously, Girardin's was by seemingly common consent selected as the culprit.

Among the hostile contemporaries of *La Presse* which shouted loudest, *Le Bon Sens* led the chorus. It had been founded some six years previously by Cauchois-Lemaire, a writer of considerable talent, but at the period with which we are immediately concerned Lemaire's connection with it had entirely ceased. He himself, in fact, had taken service under Dutacq, at *Le Siècle.* Part of his succession seems to have devolved upon Capo de Feuillide; at any rate, the nominal editor of *Le Bon Sens* played no visible part in the tragedy I am about to recount. Feuillide, to judge by the subsequent remarks of several of his noted fellow-journalists, did not rank very high either as a writer or as a man. A sincere and disinterested admirer of Armand Carrel describes him (Feuillide) as 'a pitiful personage, enjoying but small consideration'; yet this creature, who, be it noted, afterwards accepted a place on the paper, the founder of which he had so mercilessly and unscrupulously attacked, was the cause of all the evil. His moral, professional, and social worth is best shown by Girardin's proceeding with regard to him. At that time an action for libel between journalists was even a more unusual thing than it would be now. Girardin was neither a novice nor a coward *sur le pré*, yet he sent no challenge to Feuillide, but cited him before a tribunal to answer for his oft-repeated vituperation. This alone ought to have warned Armand Carrel not to interfere in a quarrel the origin of which—it cannot be said too often—did not affect the principles of either moral, social, political, or literary journalism. As far as I can gather, he was not personally acquainted with Girardin, and he knew so little of Capo de Feuillide, that he had to ask one of his sub-editors to spell the latter's name to him when he wrote the paragraph which finally led to the encounter. But for this sub-editor's reminder the paragraph would probably not have been written. I am absolutely certain of what I state, for I happen to have notes on the subject, the substance of which is scarcely known in France, and not at all outside it. These notes complete the only virtually accurate, but nevertheless incomplete, account that was ever given of the affair, namely, that of Louis Blanc in his *Histoire de Dix Ans.*

As might have been expected, the paragraph of Armand Carrel drew forth an immediate reply from Girardin. There was unquestionably a bitter tone about both. Referring to Girardin's initial prospectus, Carrel had said that, as a first bid for success, Girardin had thought fit to speak of papers which had existed for six, ten, fifteen, and twenty years respectively 'in terms which, for our own part, we are content to treat *with the contempt* they deserve.' He, moreover, took Girardin to task for having resorted to law against Capo de Feuillide, instead of refuting his statements by means similar to those employed by Feuillide, viz. the columns of his, Girardin's, paper.

Girardin retorted that Carrel's reproach was conspicuous for the absence of that loyalty which was generally attributed to him. The article wound up with the threat that if the assailants insisted on transferring the debate to commercial, financial, and administrative grounds, *La Presse* would be reluctantly compelled to follow them thither, and would publish what *Le Bon Sens*, *Le National*, and *Le Temps* had cost their shareholders. 'We, in our turn, shall make up the accounts of these papers in return for the trouble they have taken to make up ours. We shall be no more at a loss for documents in that respect than for those which would be necessary for the biographies of several contributors to those journals, should we be compelled to publish them. Even in that case we again pledge ourselves to keep within the strict truth of facts. We should have no imminent bankruptcies to predict; we should simply have to collect accomplished bankruptcies from the registers of the Tribunal of Commerce.'

This last sentence was specially aimed at Adolphe Thibaudeau, Carrel's lieutenant, and the son of the famous member of the Convention, who wrote the first *History of the Consulate and the Empire*, which stood Thiers in such good stead in the composition of his. Adolphe Thibaudeau had been involved in at least two commercial disasters of great magnitude. Those who would object to Girardin's dragging Thibaudeau into the quarrel between Carrel and himself must bear in mind that Carrel had virtually set the example by voluntarily stepping into the quarrel between Girardin and Capo de Feuillide.

A few hours after the article appeared Carrel and Thibaudeau were on their way to Girardin's, and in the interview that ensued all three seem to have acted with such courtesy and moderation as to lead their respective friends to believe that the storm had blown over. Why, then, did Carrel return alone to Girardin's either during the evening of the same day or on the morning after? No one has ever been able to ascertain, for even the best informed are not agreed as to the exact time of this second visit. That something very serious had occurred was, however, evident from Carrel's immediate choice of seconds. There again fate or accident—call it what you will—played a conspicuous part. But for the reminder of his sub-editor Carrel would not have written the paragraph that eventually brought him face to face with Girardin on the terrain; but for one of these seconds the quarrel would have been adjusted without bloodshed at the eleventh hour.

The two men selected by Carrel were wholly unfit to conduct either delicate negotiations for a meeting or to seize the opportunity for averting it after it had been decided upon. Ambert, whom his familiars called the 'grand' Ambert on account of his magnificent stature and handsome face, professed, like many others in those days, to write for *Le National*, although neither he nor his fellow hangers-on had ever penned a line for the paper. Carrel and the more serious members of his staff probably gave them the partial run of the establishment, just as the publican of bygone days allowed a couple or so of loafers to stand about his bar and his door to 'chuck' refractory topers and to keep the peace generally. Ambert was a capital swordsman and a doughty wrestler to boot, and as ready to father a private quarrel as to confront an infuriated crowd; hence a valuable auxiliary to a newspaper during the reign of Louis Philippe.

Maurice Persat, Carrel's other second, was altogether different from the *bretteur*, as typified in Ambert. The life of his principal stood, as it turned out, all the more in danger on that occasion in virtue of this difference. Persat was not a highly educated man; like hundreds with him, he had risen from the ranks under Napoleon and won his commission by sheer bravery. The Bourbons, at their return to France, put him on half-pay. The smell of powder, the clash of arms, was as the breath of their nostrils to men of Persat's stamp. Their experience of the world, their aspirations, their pastimes, were bounded by the horizon of the battlefield. Their enforced inactivity weighed heavily upon them. One day the greatest captain of his time, Spinola, asked Lord Herbert (of Cherbury) what had killed Sir Francis Vere. 'The want of fighting,' was the answer. 'That's enough to kill any general,' remarked Spinola. He might have added, 'or any true soldier, no matter what his rank.' In the early twenties there were thousands of those true soldiers in France and throughout Europe who fretted at their leisure, and the rush to the rescue of Greece in 1826 of Sir Edward Church, Lord Cochrane, Colonels Hastings and Stanhope, the French Colonel Fabvier, the Guy de Ste. Hélènes, the Balestes and Jourdains, needs probably no other sentimental explanation. Maurice Persat had not waited till then: he took service in that famous 'battalion of the Bidassoa,' commanded by the Italian Pacchiarotti, which unsuccessfully confronted the Duc d'Angoulême at his entrance into Spain in 1823, and it was there that he became acquainted with Armand Carrel. After some hard fighting in Algeria, Persat, who had meanwhile got his company, retired in 1834 on his pension, when Carrel had him appointed gérant to *Le National*. The reader need not look out the word in a dictionary; the meaning given to it there will not help him in the least to define Persat's position, or, for that matter, the position of any of his predecessors, contemporaries, or successors on a French newspaper. In Douglas Jerrold's capital little piece, *The Prisoners of War*, Pall Mall says to Firebrace, 'As a sailor, isn't it your duty to die for your country?' 'Most certainly,' replies the latter. 'As a civilian,' clinches Pall Mall, 'it is mine to lie for her.' In his capacity of quasi-responsible, in reality dummy, publisher of *Le National*, as an erstwhile soldier and actual civilian, it was the dual duty of Persat to lie for the paper when the editor or some contributor did not care to face some more than ordinary irate victim of their pens, and to fight for the paper when, as in the case of the

Dujarrier-Beauvalon duel,[1] the chief was not available. In addition to all this it was the gérant's duty to suffer the various short or long terms of imprisonment the French lawcourts were, until the fall of the Second Empire, in the frequent habit of inflicting on him for *délits de presse.* The habit, by the bye, though much less systematically indulged in than of yore, has not entirely been discarded under the Third Republic.

The strain upon Persat's intellect was, therefore, not very severe, inasmuch as his lying seems to have been of the most transparent character. On the other hand, he bore his periodically recurring terms of imprisonment with the utmost stoicism. What he regretted most was the paucity of fighting, for though not a Bobadil, like Ambert, he was not exempt from the vice of his fellows, the soldiers of the First Empire, and his intense delight was to 'mettre flamberge au vent.' When appointed to his post he had been under the impression that this would be his principal, if not his sole occupation. Strange to say, during his two years of office, the opportunities to 'distinguish himself by extinguishing others' had indeed been few, and he was correspondingly disappointed. But just as the actor when not acting himself delights to see others act; just as the gambler when unable to gamble for want of means seeks the vicarious excitement of watching others gamble; just as the temporarily or permanently retired prize-fighter holds the sponge and the bottle for his fellow-pugilist, so the swordsman and marksman find their consolation for not 'going out' by supporting those that do go out. Hence, it may be taken for granted that there was no attempt on Persat's part amicably to adjust the difference between Girardin and Carrel, to whom Persat was, moreover, blindly devoted in his withal honest and valiant way.

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[1] See *An Englishman in Paris,* vol. i. ch. v.

This devotion had probably the effect of making him scout the idea of Carrel being in the wrong; but even if he had been convinced of the contrary, he would only have said with Sir Lucius O'Trigger, 'Pray be easy, sir, the quarrel is a very pretty one as it stands; we should only spoil it by trying to explain it'; and added, 'What the devil signifies right when your honour is concerned?' For in those days, and even in France of to-day, the honour of a military man is supposed to be constituted of a more delicate fibre than that of a civilian (*un petit pékin, quoi!*), and Girardin was just as much of a pékin to Persat, and perhaps to Carrel himself, as was Prince-President Louis Napoleon to Changarnier and Cavaignac.

Sheridan's swashbuckler had no objection to the lazy sons of peace settling the justice of such quarrels—after they had been fought out with the sword. There was among the immediate entourage of Carrel one son of peace—by no means a lazy one—who considered it more sensible to settle the justice of that particular quarrel before the encounter took place. This was Achille Grégoire, the real printer of *Le National*, who, twelve years later, when the staff of the paper was practically governing France for some months, became

Préfet of the Department of the Upper-Saône. Grégoire simply took his share of the loaves and fishes, the prospect of which is such a powerful factor in French republican politics, or, for the matter of that, in all French politics; but even before Macaulay told us, we knew that 'a vice sanctioned by general opinion is merely a vice,' and we ought, therefore, not to grudge Grégoire his praise for his attempted action in the Carrel-Girardin affair. Grégoire had made up his mind that the affair could be settled honourably and amicably without the arbitration of cold steel or molten lead; but he was also aware that the first and foremost condition to such a settlement was the exclusion of Persat from the debate; hence he bethought himself of a stratagem by which he would replace the gérant at the eleventh hour. He knew that the meeting was fixed for seven o'clock on the morning of the 23rd July, that Ambert was to precede Carrel to the Bois de Vincennes, while Persat was to accompany the editor of *Le National*. Shortly after six on that morning Grégoire made his appearance at Carrel's, obviously uninvited, but justified in his disregard of ceremony by his well-known affection for Carrel. On the pretext of having forgotten his cigars he induced Persat to go in quest of some, alleging that he, Grégoire, was no judge, and had always to trust to others. The moment Persat's back was turned Grégoire, without revealing his intentions, made Carrel jump into a tilbury with a very fast trotter which was waiting at the door. Grégoire himself took the reins, and drove post-haste,

Emile de Girardin

trusting to the horse's legs to frustrate Persat's evident desire for an armed encounter. Fate willed it otherwise. Persat, at his return, guessed the drift of Grégoire's stratagem, and rushed to an adjacent livery-stable, where he managed to procure a faster horse than Grégoire's. Seated behind this he reached the spot as soon as the latter, whose contemplated rôle of peacemaker was nipped in the bud.

Would Grégoire have succeeded if sufficient time had been left to him? There is no reason to doubt it, inasmuch as Girardin's seconds, MM. Lautour-Mézerai and Paillard de Villeneuve, were sensible and seasoned men of the world, who, in virtue of their own profession, knew the exact moral value of a genuinely journalistic quarrel, let alone of a purely fictitious one, such as this happened to be.[1] The presence of Carrel's properly constituted second prevented Grégoire's intervention; the pistols were loaded; Girardin was struck in the thigh, Carrel was wounded in the lower abdomen, and breathed his last during the night of the 24th July. Once more we are tempted to ask, 'What had chivalrous or practical journalism to do with all this?' Nothing whatever. If Du Guesclin had picked a quarrel with the Benedictine monk, Berthold Schwartz, because the latter, after having invented gunpowder, had made the best of his invention by selling it to the Genoese; if Schwartz had run Du Guesclin through the body, should we be justified in saying that the science of progressive warfare had killed chivalry?

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[1] Paillard de Villeneuve was at that time the editor of *La Gazette des Tribunaux*, which practically had been founded sixty years previously, and must be considered as the pioneer of all the existing law journals, although before that period there were issued periodically collections of famous trials, both French and foreign, such as the volumes of Guyot de Pitaval and des Essarts. Paillard de Villeneuve is, however, best known as the leading counsel in the noted literary lawsuits of his day, notably that connected with Victor Hugo's *Hernani.* For particulars of Lautour-Mézerai, otherwise 'The Man with the Camelia,' see *An Englishman in Paris*, vol. i. pp. 166 *et seq.*

It is but right to add that Lanfrey's epigram, coined several years after the event, reflected even then the feelings of a great number of Girardin's contemporaries on the subject. Not content with the fatal issue of the first quarrel they had forced upon him, they remained his implacable adversaries. Unable to stem the success of *La Presse* itself, they brought all their malice and vindictiveness to bear upon the personality of its guiding spirit; and it was in this difficult and irritating position that Girardin not only showed at his best, but earned what bids fair to be long-enduring, if not absolutely immortal, fame. It is no small thing to have the title of 'King of the Journalists' bestowed upon oneself during one's life, to have the justness of this title admitted by some of the most eminent members of one's own craft, and to retain the title undisputedly after death. Yet this is unquestionably the case in this instance. No honest assailant of French journalism, whether fundamentally hostile to, critically indulgent of, or thoroughly sympathetic with Girardin's political programme, can afford to ignore his claim to one of the foremost niches in that gallery of men whose names have become household words among the educated of both hemispheres. Nor must it be thought for an instant that this claim to distinction rests on the sensational incidents that marked the beginnings of *La Presse*, or to the difficulties begotten of them. As we shall directly point out, these difficulties were virtually only the complement of a series which had beset his life from the outset. Girardin's fame rests on firmer foundations. It rests upon a phenomenal spirit of enterprise, a craving for daring innovation, a fertility of invention, and a true conception of the part democracy will eventually be cast to play in the drama of civilisation. He was a political, moral, and social seer in the sense in which my friend Max Nordau is one; far less literarily endowed and less theoretically scientific than the latter, also less paradoxical, but sufficiently paradoxical to justify Lamartine's description of him: 'With Girardin, paradox is the field-glass through which he espies truth at a distance,' or words to that effect. Nor does it detract from Girardin's value that most of those truths which he saw plainly enough are as yet scarcely visible on the mental horizon of the self-appointed as well as on that of the constitutionally elected politicians of the world. For all that, what he saw were not so many mirages, but the faint and distant glimmerings of slowly growing and still more slowly approaching luminaries in the firmament of political, economical, and sociological science; which luminaries will finally dispel all darkness, unless they set the heavens ablaze and destroy the earth by their falling fires.

Who and what was this man, this keen observer, determined to impart his observations to his fellow-men that they might profit by them? Theoretically, he was an intruder in a regularly constituted society, being the fruit of an illicit love-affair between a married woman and a bachelor; and, what was worse for him—at any rate at his birth and during his boyhood—of a man and a woman in the upper classes of society, which fact deprived him altogether of a mother's care. His early childhood was spent in an obscure quarter of Paris, amidst people honest and kindly withal, who earned their living by rearing the children, legitimate and illegitimate, of others. There is no positive evidence that the little lad ever saw his mother, whose beauty caused Greuze to take her as his model for his 'Girl with the Dove.' On the other hand his father, if we are to believe Girardin himself, looked after him carefully and affectionately, and even allowed him to bear his name until the lad was between eight and nine years old, when General de Girardin married. General de Girardin was not endowed with much strength of character, and he appears to have yielded to the wishes of his bride rather than to his own by withdrawing from all personal communication with his son. Napoleon III., whom we would not otherwise compare to that one of his uncle's generals, did practically the same thing with regard to his illegitimate sons when the Prince Imperial was born. The Comte de Benne, who died about twelve years ago, and the Comte d'Orx, who I believe is alive and in the best of health, both bore a remarkable resemblance to their father, who was very fond of them, especially of the latter; but the Empress insisted that their visits should cease, and the Emperor gave way. Josephine, who could have alleged far more sentimental reasons for excluding her husband's children from her home than either the Empress Eugénie or Mme. Alexandre de Girardin, seeing that these offspring were the results of Napoleon's infidelities during their marriage, never attempted to do so; if she had she would have failed. It simply shows the difference of character between certain men.

Practically, then, this lad of nine was left to his own devices as far as his mental training was concerned, for the man to whom he was intrusted, M. Darel, a former subaltern of Napoleon's army, seems to have been in no way distinguished from the majority of his fellow-officers of the same rank, the type of which I have already sketched in Maurice Persat. M. Darel, moreover, delegated the duty of watching over young Girardin to his (Darel's) father, a groom on a stud-farm of the state in Normandy, who probably had not the remotest idea of the boy's parentage, inasmuch as his name was changed for that of Émile Lamothe, which figured on his certificate of birth, taken out at the time of it by his mother's maid. Nothing, absolutely nothing, whether good or bad, should astonish us in connection with French legislation of the past, or for that matter of the present, on the subject of illegitimate children. 'La recherche de la paternité est interdite,' says the Code Napoléon; and though one may feel disposed to applaud the sentence, which forbids blackmailing in a certain shape, one cannot help smiling at a duly issued document equally granting the principle of anonymity to the mother. Among the minor anomalies of this legislation, not the least curious used to be that which fixed the cost of a certificate of birth for an illegitimate child at seven francs fifty centimes, while similar credentials for a child born in wedlock were charged two francs. I advisedly say used, for I am under the impression that since the advent of the Third Republic legitimate and illegitimate children are equals—before the money-till of the registrar.

To return to little Émile, who, while left in the care of the elder Darel, was seemingly allowed to run wild. This lack of supervision had, however, one advantage—it enabled the lad to acquire a healthier body than he would have had under different circumstances, his constitution being far from robust. The healthy mind was due to the elementary tuition of the humble parish priest, supplemented by a great deal of desultory reading on the part of Émile himself at a neighbouring manor, the library of which contained about twenty thousand volumes. Long before he was twenty Émile was turned adrift upon the world with but a slender provision in the shape of a small capital, of which he appears to have had the absolute control, inasmuch as two years after his start in life there was little or nothing left of it. It had, however, not been spent in riotous living, but in stock-exchange speculations, the taste for which was either induced by his surroundings or merely developed by the young fellow's instinctive and precocious knowledge that money would, after all, prove the most powerful factor in the struggle for the social position of which his father's gratuitous selfishness had deprived him. We must bear in mind that a Frenchman may 'legitimise' his natural children 'by adoption' without marrying their mother. Alexandre Dumas the elder, and at least a dozen of eminent men, did this without the least prejudice to their reputation; on the contrary, this spontaneous act of justice and reparation raised them in the public's estimation. General Alexandre de Girardin, in spite of his military rank and his subsequent functions of grand veneur—let us say, master of the buckhounds—at the court of the restored Bourbons, was in no way eminent; in fact, if we are to believe the gossip of the time, he was mainly conspicuous for a number of more or less ridiculous idiosyncrasies. Yet he never volunteered to 'legitimise' his son, even when the latter was fairly on the road to fame. The motive which eventually induced him to acquiesce in his son's proposal to that effect will by no means bear sifting. At the moment with which we are more immediately concerned there would not have been the faintest chance of even his reluctant assent to such a request had Émile been sufficiently ill-advised to make it; so Émile, who knew this, appealed, like Edmund in *King Lear*, to the gods to 'stand up for bastards.' But the deities appealed to were either the wrong ones or the appeal was premature, for Plutus dismissed it—with costs, while Mars would not allow the appellant to state a case, on the ground of his dimensions being *not* 'as well compact as honest Madam's issue.'

Then Émile turned to literature. His first attempt in that direction, a semi-autobiographical novel with his own name for a title, has been variously judged, but there is no doubt that it achieved a certain measure of success. On the novel reader of to-day it would probably produce a profound feeling of weariness, in spite of several forcibly written and carefully thought-out pages. There is, however, scarcely any relief from its sustained melancholy; its hero seems to delight in his own misery, and finally kills himself. Its defects notwithstanding, the book claims more than a passing mention here for obvious reasons. To begin with, it was the sole attempt at what we might term genuine literature of the famous journalist that was to be, for his subsequent efforts at playwriting cannot be admitted as literature. Secondly, *Émile* contains meditations on the iniquity of duelling for trivial causes that strike one as little short of prophetic. Thirdly, the whole of the story is a fair sample of the prevailing literary taste of that period, when every novelist not only felt himself bound to create 'a hero on stilts' like Chateaubriand's *René* and Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe*, but was determined to imitate, as far as possible in real life, the puppet strutting through his work.

'In 1823-1824 it was the fashion to be suffering from pulmonary disease,' says Alexandre Dumas in his *Mémoires*. 'Everybody was consumptive, but the poets were more consumptive than everybody else; it was considered good form to spit blood at the slightest emotion and to die before thirty.' And further on: 'The only kind of gaiety allowed was the Satanic gaiety, the gaiety of Mephistopheles or Manfred. Goethe and Byron were the two great arbiters of the laughter of the century. Like others, I had put a mask on my face. You have but to look at my portraits of those days. There is one by Deveria, painted in 1831, which with a few modifications might become the portrait of "Antony." This mask was, nevertheless, gradually dropped, in order to show my natural face in my *Impressions of Travel*. But, I repeat, in 1832 I still posed as Manfred and Childe Harold.'

Alfred de Vigny 'reposed' on his sofa at home in a cloak *à la* Oswald, copied from the celebrated picture by Gérard. Béranger tried as much as possible to look like an old concièrge, so as to 'impress' the populace. He wore a rose in his buttonhole to draw attention to the fact that he had not the Legion of Honour. Victor Hugo walked about with bent head, obviously too small for all the sublime thoughts it contained, and therefore too heavy to be carried erect, so that the people might exclaim, 'What a thinker!' Lamartine wore the frock-coat of the politician, but took care to remind his listeners every now and again that 'in his youth he had been the most beauteous of the children of men.' It is not surprising that both Emile de Girardin and Alexandre Dumas were bitten by this mania for 'attitudinising' in their fiction as well as in their daily lives at the beginning of their career. They had this in common, that they scarcely possessed the rudiments of an ordinary education. We have seen the amount of schooling enjoyed by Émile; Dumas had a little more than that, but without the latter's advantage of a large library at hand. When General Foy wished to recommend him for a clerkship to the Duc d'Orléans (afterwards Louis Philippe), young Dumas had to confess his ignorance of everything that goes to the making of an educated man. It would be extremely interesting to trace the evolution of the genius of the King of Novelists side by side with that of the genius of the King of the Journalists, but space fails. We should then be able to see how perfectly natural it was that both should have been tempted to imitate the literary, sumptuary, and social exaggerations of men who, on the face of it, were their superiors, if not in parentage, at any rate in accident of birth, acknowledged position, and scholarship. Yes, it was perfectly natural that Girardin and Dumas should at first have stalked about *en déguisé* like the others. But while the overweening vanity of Chateaubriand, Hugo, Lamartine, and Vigny prompted them to go on masquerading to the end, the common-sense of Girardin and Dumas, aiding their originality, instinctively drove them to the opposite extreme. They preferred to show their genius divested of all pomp and splendour, in fact, *en négligé.*

The following stories will illustrate my meaning better than any explanation. One day, while Hugo was living at Guernsey, Alexandre Dumas paid him a visit. Hugo was holding forth on the terrors of exile, etc., when Dumas stopped him short. 'Don't talk nonsense; the butter is infinitely superior here to that in Paris.' Lying on a sick-bed with (the now nonagenarian) Ernest Legouvé sitting by his side, Lamartine suddenly exclaimed: 'Oh, how cruel mankind is!' A servant had just entered the room and handed him some papers. The author of *Adrienne Lecouvreur* naturally thought they were some harsh criticisms; they were nothing of the kind. It was simply a promissory note for a heavy amount that had been protested and on which judgment had been obtained. Lamartine never troubled about it, and left Legouvé to settle the matter as best he could. Dumas troubled equally little about such things, but he did not fling the burden of them on others.[1] 'What do you think of my boy, M. de Lamartine?' asked a gentleman after an interview, during which he had presented his son. 'Your son was not sufficiently impressed at the sight of me,' was Lamartine's answer. The story has been several times contradicted. Legouvé, Lamartine's most friendly biographer, endeavoured to tone down its glaring conceit by suggesting that Lamartine merely rebuked the lad's callousness face to face with great fame in general—as represented at that moment by his interlocutor. Dumas, whose claim to represent fame in general was, I should imagine, quite as valid as Lamartine's, never chided either small or big boys for not being awestruck in his presence. I was not quite thirteen when I caught my first glimpse of him. I knew *The Three Musketeers* and its sequels, *Monte Cristo*, and several of his other works, very well. My admiration for him was as unbounded then as it is now, yet I did not stand awestruck, nor did he expect it. Ten minutes later he was asking me all sorts of questions about the school at Aix-la-Chapelle, whence I had just come. When, in 1832, Lamartine joined the Chamber, he was asked to which party he was going to belong. 'To the Socialist party,' was the answer. The word was new to his colleagues, and one of them said so. 'That 's only a word; what does it mean?' he remarked. 'No!' retorted Lamartine; 'it represents an idea.' 'That may be, but it is not represented on any of our benches. Where will you sit?' 'I'll get up to the ceiling and hang on there.' Again we turn to the explanation offered by Legouvé: 'He always proceeded by instinct to the spot whither wings only could carry him.'

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[1] See *An Englishman in Paris*, vol. i. pp. 86 *et seq.*

Girardin, when he entered the house two years later, used no metaphor with regard to the position he intended to take up, although, like Lamartine, he refused to pledge himself to fight under any of the old standards, and lost no time in unfurling a new one. *La Presse* was virtually the outcome of this determination, and looking through its early files more than half a century after its début, one feels bound to admit that its political as well as its purely literary columns might serve as models to-day. There was no attempt at 'highfalutin',' no appeal to the 'immortal principles of the Revolution bequeathed to us by our fathers' as a bait to republicanism; on the other hand, no direct or indirect allusion to the right, whether divine or constitutional, of kings as a sop to the monarchists; there was no display of learning in the discussion of artistic, dramatic, and literary problems: the whole was conceived and executed in the spirit in which Garrick is said to have conceived and enacted Hamlet, and the ordinary reader may possibly have flattered himself like Partridge that 'he could write articles as good as these,' which illusion on the reader's part—as some contemporaries have discovered by now—is of immense advantage to the circulation of a paper. Partridge, under the influence of a similar conceit, takes to amateur acting, but the money he and his fellow-amateurs disburse in the attempt does not flow either into the pockets of the actor who first imbued them with the idea, or into those of the manager at whose theatre the idea was begotten. The amateur scribbler, on the other hand, sends his lucubrations to the paper that stirred his ambition to rush into print, and orders so many copies to give to his friends. That paper becomes his oracle for ever afterwards, for there is nothing like an oracle the strings of which one has helped to pull at some time or other. 'The power of a paper is not due to the talent of its writers, but to the influence of its subscribers,' said Girardin, and he was right. So well was this policy observed, that not only all of the writers on

La Presse, remarkable to a man, but their director himself, were accessible to the humblest of the public. They were not dimly visible through a cloud; they were not seated on thrones attired in academical costumes, and laying down the law to the world at large in classical language; but they were ensconced in comfortable armchairs and dressed in becoming *négligé*, as distinct from *débraillé.* Their advice was often marked by great homeliness of form, like that of Abernethy to his patients. But woe to their opponents who, on the strength of this homeliness, pretended to don magnificent apparel and resort to high-flown periods in order to overawe or ridicule them. They were mercilessly stripped of their finery of garb and tongue, and confronted with portraits of themselves in pen and ink at a time when they were fighting in the 'reach-me-down' and motley garb of political guerillas or in the tattered rags of hopeless opposition.

This system of collecting a man's counterfeit from his own lips and of bringing it as evidence against him, should he attempt tacitly to forget or actively to deny his past, was carried to a pitch of perfection by Émile de Girardin which it has absolutely not attained since. It was conceived at an early stage of his journalistic career, and in its inaugural state was simplicity itself, because it only consisted then in the docketing of the speeches of all public men. A few years before Girardin's death I had the opportunity to see the room that held these records of most of his French contemporaries of note, for he rarely troubled about foreigners unless they were of the highest distinction. I say records, because the speeches had been supplemented by information of a more private character, and not always gathered from the most avowable sources, seeing that Girardin never scrupled to adopt the method of Joshua, the son of Nun, when he made up his mind to spy the land. The room was originally intended as Girardin's bedroom when the mansion was built in the Rue de la Pérousse (then called the Boulevard du Roi de Rome). The library was meant to hold the precious documents. Their owner, however, felt fidgety at not having them under his immediate supervision both day and night; so he shifted his bed into the adjoining dressing-room and had his archives arranged under his very nose. The arrangement itself was extremely simple, and calls for no comment—mahogany shelves and cardboard boxes alphabetically distributed. I have an idea, though, that these boxes only contained copies of the authentic memoranda; these were stowed elsewhere. Girardin, who could be very amiable at times, asked me to test his system. I named a political personage, somewhat *en évidence* at the time, and in less than a moment I had not only the main lines of his career before me, but particulars which could not be gathered either from books or newspapers. 'You are truly the recording angel,' I remarked. 'That's what my first wife used to call me,' he answered with a sad smile, his eyes filling with tears. 'But,' he said after a little while, 'she believed in me as no human being ever believed in another, as no wife ever believed in her husband. There was a time when she felt thoroughly convinced that I could save the Second Republic from becoming the plaything of the political adventurer. 'I am not alluding to Louis Napoleon,' he added significantly; 'at that moment Louis Napoleon was not in Paris. I am not at all certain that a republic with Cavaignac at its head would not have been worse than an empire with Napoleon. But I wanted neither a Cavaignac nor a Napoleon. I wanted a republic with Lamartine at its head. It might have been worth trying had it been tried properly. Not many months ago you sent what was practically a poet to Berlin, for Disraeli was that, and he did not do worse than others would have done. But to come back to Mme. de Girardin for a moment. Things were getting from bad to worse, and no one seemed to know what would be the upshot of it all, when one evening a friend of my wife said to her, pointing upwards: "Only He who is above can get us out of our trouble." "Yes," was the answer; "he is busy trying now." "Of whom are you thinking?" asked her friend; "I was thinking of God." "I was thinking of Émile, and your pointing upward strengthened my thought, for you know that his study is just over our heads." That was my wife's estimate of me. The story, as far as I know, has never been told in print; I make you a present of it.'

Odd to say, Delphine de Girardin, *née* Gay, is better known to educated Englishmen than her husband, but her fame with them rests upon what, without injustice, must be called her minor achievements rather than her major one. There are few playgoers who have not, at some time or other, seen one or all three of her more popular pieces in their English garb, namely, *Une Femme qui déteste son Mari* (the original of Tom Taylor's *A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*, inseparably connected with the name of Mrs. Kendal), *La Joie fait peur* (Andy Blake), and *Le Chapeau d'un Horloger* (The Clockmaker's Hat). On the other hand, there is not one educated Englishman in a hundred thousand who has ever read *Les Lettres Parisiennes* of the Vicomte de Launay. It is in virtue of these weekly contributions to her husband's paper that she is entitled to a place in that gallery of genius *en négligé* from which, as portrait painters, for instance, Rubens and Van Dyck would be excluded, and into which Rembrandt and Franz Hals would be admitted. If Mme. de Sévigné had written her letters 'for the press,' which of course she did not, she would be the only *chroniqueur*—I do not like the word *chroniqueuse*—who could claim precedence of her. Delphine de Girardin not only swept away without warning the Salic law that had hitherto prevailed with regard to the *Chronique Parisienne*, but proved by her first speech from that throne which she had usurped that henceforth she could and would hold it against all comers. Before and after the Vicomte de Launay's advent, *chroniqueurs Parisiens* like Eugène Guinot, Auguste Villemot, and Henri Audigier—to mention only a few out of a score—converted or tried to convert their readers, whenever they touched politics at all, which they did rarely, by stories entertaining enough in themselves, but on the face of them so utterly improbable as to breed a doubt about their truth in the minds of the most credulous. 'I was a republican before the last Revolution,' wrote Villemot one day. 'Shortly after the change of dynasty I was leaning one morning over the parapet of the Pont des Arts, quietly puffing at my cigar and watching the incoming tide, when all of a sudden a street urchin came up to me: "Can't you find some work to do, you lazy brute of a bourgeois?" he said, and at the same time banged my hat over my ears. By the time I had managed to extract my head and my ears from my hat I had ceased to be a republican.' Amusing, no doubt, as a political squib, and perhaps true as far as the misbehaviour of a young ruffian went, for I happen to know of a worse act on the part of another young ruffian in a somewhat better station of life, who twitted a poor usher with the absence of a shirt under his frock-coat. Vastly amusing, no doubt, but hardly convincing as the chief cause of a political conversion. Now let us see how Mme. de Girardin set to work when wishing to point a political moral, such as, for instance, the utter absence of scruple of the republicans when wanting to harass a member of the King's Government, viz. Marshal Soult, the same who was so vociferously cheered by the English public at the Queen's coronation sixty years ago. 'When Marshal Soult is in office he has lost the battle of Toulouse; when he is in the Opposition he has won it.' It was simply the sprightly introduction to that more serious sentence of her husband's declaration of the 14th February 1848 when he tendered his resignation as a deputy. 'I see no possible room for a man like myself between an intolerant majority proceeding at random and an illogical and irresponsible minority going they know not whither.'

For these two were absolutely fearless in their advocacy of what they conceived to be the truth. The fragile woman and genuine poetess who had voluntarily stepped down from a very lofty pedestal to link her lot to that of a man who was literally at the foot of the ladder, the summit of which he was eventually to reach—this woman had a lion's heart in a frail envelope. Her courage was at least equal to that of her husband, and his, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, was indeed great. According to some of Girardin's most persistent detractors, his openly expressed determination, after the fatal duel with Carrel, to 'go out no more under no matter what provocation,' not only enabled him to attack freely, but insured him 'immunity from all counter attack.' This was only correct in a certain and very limited sense. The Paris rough, and especially the revolutionary rough, was, and is, not particular as to the means of defence of those whom he assailed and assails, or to the assailed one's ethical objections to use those means. He is only careful to shield himself as much as possible from danger. 'Take the women and the little ones behind whom you are firing away,' said a commissary of police on the occasion of a riot during the Second Empire, 'and then we'll talk to you.' Sir

Henry Lytton Bulwer called the revolution of '48 'an invasion of barbarians led by Orpheus' (Lamartine). 'But the chorus is very expensive—thirty sous per day for each chorister; how are the finances of the country going to suffice for that?' he wrote about three weeks later. Girardin, who had at one time imagined that he might be Lamartine's orchestral chief and be able to regulate the march of the invasion, soon became aware of the truth of Sir Henry's words, and raised his voice against the national workshops, the forced increase of salaries, and the processions to the Hôtel-de-Ville that succeeded each other hourly to this effect. Then the barbarians turned upon him, and would have rent him but for his personal courage. He insisted upon confronting them unarmed, and only supported by his friend Dr. Cabarrus—a nephew of Mme. Tallien. Three months later Cavaignac flung him into a cell, and both he and his wife thought his last hour had come. They never flinched. As it happened, the danger was imaginary, but neither he nor she moved a step to avert it. They never forgave Cavaignac. In 1853 *La Presse* was the only paper deliberately to set at nought the arbitrary injunctions of that very arbitrary Minister of Police, M. de Maupas, who, had he had his will, would have transported Girardin without the formalities of a trial, as he would have transported twenty-one others, but for Girardin's timely cry of alarm. It is but just to say that the Emperor knew nothing of all this until the affair got wind.

Napoleon Bertrand, a son of the general who followed

Napoleon to St. Helena, bought a pair of white kid gloves previous to his departure from Paris for Algeria, and on the day of the storming of Constantine put them on 'fresh' in honour of the occasion. The Girardins rarely discarded their *négligé*; they were rather like the great Condé, who flung his marshal's baton into the trenches, so that his soldiers might follow him in order to recover it, or else they opened a campaign—again like that great captain—to the sound of a couple of dozen fiddles. But they never had the so-called classical music of journalism; the airs were throughout lively, with this result, that they made the enemy dance—with rage. One day Louis Veuillot drew a picture of the morals of the old régime as against those of the Third Republic. The ordinary journalist would have answered with a long dissertation. Girardin did nothing of the kind. He simply drew from his pigeon-holes a yellow, faded letter from a knight of the order of Saint-Louis, who petitioned for the admission of his daughter to the Parc-aux-Cerfs. Louis Veuillot did not answer.

And thus for more than forty years Girardin continued to fiddle either by himself or in concert with his contributors. He reminds one of that little piper-boy who for a whole day, through the fluctuating chances of a battle fought by Frederick the Great, kept piping, and piped liveliest when Fritz's fortunes were at their worst. Emile de Girardin was one of the few genuine patriots France has seen. Even his mistakes were patriotic.

XIII

POETS AS LEGISLATORS

One evening, after having witnessed a tragedy of Corneille or, perhaps, of Racine—I do not exactly remember—Napoleon I. averred that, if those two poets had lived in his time, he would have made them his ministers. I am convinced that Napoleon would not have done this, and my conviction is not solely based upon a general consideration of the great captain's views of the duties of a legislator, but upon an incident showing his knowledge of the poet's unfitness for such a rôle.

When Chateaubriand was elected to the chair rendered vacant by the death of Marie-Joseph Chénier at the Académie Française, his reception speech was, as usual, submitted to a committee of the Institution previously to its being delivered at a public sitting. As a matter of course, curiosity was at its height, and the Emperor had the proofs of the speech read to him privately by Daru. He felt deeply annoyed at the terms in which Chateaubriand referred to the principal events of the Revolution, and the trial and sentence passed upon Louis XVI.; and he very bitterly expressed his disapproval of the members of the

Institute who had allowed those remarks of the author of *Génie du Christianisme* to pass, seemingly oblivious of the danger they involved. For several days Napoleon scarcely spoke of anything else to his immediate entourage. There is no need to reproduce the whole of his philippic. The principal passages, as affecting the subsequent ambition of Chateaubriand to guide the political destinies of France, will suffice. These passages were not only prophetic with regard to that ambition itself, but foreshadowed the utter lack of mental weight for such a self-proposed task. 'What,' exclaimed the Emperor; 'I am killing myself body and soul to make France forget the divisions of the past; I have cured her of her revolutionary fever by intoxicating her with military glory; all my efforts are tending to make old and modern France live in peace under my sceptre; I have gathered around me men who hitherto detested each other; . . . and, having done all this, shall I allow a vainglorious man of letters (*un lettré vaniteux*) to compromise the happy results of my policy for the sake of his rounding off his periods? . . . It is I who have taken them all under my protection; and shall I let a knight-errant (*un paladin*), who does not understand the mere outlines of the work I am accomplishing, set me at defiance? It appears that M. de Chateaubriand is displeased with France such as I have reorganised it for him. Very well, let him go and live elsewhere.'[1] This was

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[1] As far as I am aware, these words, and the occasion on which they were spoken, are not mentioned in any biography or history of Napoleon. They

Napoleon's mental measurement of one of the greatest littérateurs and poets of his time as a would-be saviour of society in France, and as a possible aspirant to the position of a statesman in the immediate future. Would Napoleon have judged Corneille and Racine differently had they been alive? We think not. Napoleon was aware of the tendency of every poet to be decoyed from the positive path by chimeras, of every poet's insatiable greed for bespangled glory, both of which characteristics might also be called or christened poesy. He, moreover, knew that the greater the poet, the greater those characteristics; and the parts subsequently played by poets in the French legislatures of the nineteenth century proved the correctness of Napoleon's judgment.

Louis XVIII. was not an eagle, but he was not a fool or a visionary, like his brother and successor, Charles X. He would not have said, or allowed it to be said for him: 'There is nothing changed in France; there is only one Frenchman added to the others (Il n'y a rien de changé en France; il n'y a qu'un Français de plus.') He knew that many things were changed in France since he, as the Comte de Provence, and his junior, as the Comte d'Artois, had flitted across her border, and their senior had been beheaded on the Place de la Nation. Above all did he know that *the Frenchman* who was uppermost in many Frenchmen's minds, in spite of the *enthousiasme de*

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are, nevertheless, absolutely authentic. I owe them to the souvenirs of the Comte d'Haussonville, entitled *Ma Jeunesse*. Paris: Calman Levy. 1886.

commande and the too ostentatious display of the White Cockade, was not *the Frenchman* who had entered Paris in the wake of the Allies, but the Corsican who had gone to the island of Elba. Louis XVIII. neither liked Chateaubriand himself nor his works; nevertheless he felt bound to praise the political pamphlet, *De Buonaparte et des Bourbons*, which Chateaubriand flung upon the winds of publicity almost immediately after the entry of the allied troops into the capital, and which pamphlet had evidently been prepared long beforehand. 'It is worth a whole army to the Bourbons,' said Louis XVIII. That in reality he did not consider it worth a regiment, and that his unexpressed opinion was nearer the mark than the expressed, was proved by two facts. Chateaubriand's reward for having 'raised a moral army for the Bourbons' was his appointment as envoy to Sweden; the moral army thus raised vanished the moment Napoleon set foot on the shore near Cannes. To be lauded as a 'Monk among pamphleteers,' and to be relegated as a superfluous piece of diplomatic furniture to one of the back-courts of Europe, was not to Chateaubriand's taste; consequently he made not the least haste to take up his appointment; and when Louis XVIII. fled to Ghent, at the approach of Napoleon, the Deucalion of 'his moral army' followed him thither. At the second Restoration the King bestowed upon him a peerage, with a seat in the Upper Chamber; and it was in that capacity that he verified Napoleon's opinion of him by preaching political vengeance instead of appeasement. It would, nevertheless, be difficult to find in any of his too frequent speeches the germs of even a consistent scheme of political hatred; for in spite of their 'catchy' eloquence, the simplest analyst cannot fail to discover their meretriciousness, and what is worse, their quasi-versatile meretriciousness. The Upper Chamber could not be closed against him; yet it was evident that to allow him the faintest voice in the discussion of France's home-policy would involve the risk of making confusion worse confounded. Not only did his speeches display an utter lack of cohesive political principles, but they annoyed his fellow-peers of all shades by their alternate appeals to constitutionalism and absolutism. So evident was the necessity for getting rid of Chateaubriand at all cost as to strike even the King, who sent him, within the space of less than two years, to Berlin, London, and Vienna; in other words, to places where his power for doing mischief by his inordinate vanity and his pretensions as a heaven-born diplomatist would be reduced to a minimum. The recollection of their common action against the exiled one of St. Helena, who had just breathed his last, was still too vivid among the great powers of Europe for their pseudo-friendship to be disturbed by either the vapouring or the idealism of Chateaubriand; so he was practically as safe, from the non-disturbing point of view, in the capitals of Great Britain and Prussia as he would have been at St. Petersburg or Vienna, and safer than in Paris, even, perhaps, as Minister for Foreign Affairs. That portfolio being for the moment beyond his reach, he pounced upon the only occasion that was accidentally afforded to him for making himself conspicuous—namely, at the Congress of Vienna. I say 'accidentally,' because, knowing Louis XVIII.'s want of sympathy with him, his works, and, above all, his so-called statesmanlike aspirations, one may take it for granted that Chateaubriand would not have been included in the monarch's suite if the latter had not been disabled by gout from attending personally, like Alexander I., Francis of Austria, Frederick William of Prussia, and the rulers of various Italian states. To a poet of Chateaubriand's histrionic instincts, the opportunity to distinguish himself before 'such a *parterre* of Kings' was too good to be missed; so he essayed enacting the part of a 'heaven-born Richelieu,' as Talma at Erfurth had enacted 'Cinna.' Ever afterwards he boasted of his having been the originator of the Franco-Spanish conflict which broke out in the following year, in consequence of French interference in Spanish home affairs. In reality, Chateaubriand reminds one of the policeman who, having failed to get a 'big case,' 'ran in' an old woman of sixty, 'all by himself,' and proudly averred that he could have done it 'if she had been eighty.'

There is no need to follow him step by step in his political career. Twice a much-coveted portfolio was given to him, and twice the gift proved a snare and a delusion, not only to the recipient, but to the donors. The second experiment practically closed the door against all further attempts of a similar nature at curbing his impatience of all ministerial and official restraint, and necessitated a 'brilliant exile,' as it was called, in the shape of his removal to Rome as ambassador to the Vatican. Diplomatic reticence and reserve, not to say discipline, were apparently as irksome to him as political and ministerial. He constantly cavilled at and criticised the, to him, puerile questions of etiquette, matters of form, and daily recurring trivial affairs, to which, still according to him, the legations and chancelleries at Rome attached a too great and therefore ridiculous importance. About thirty years later an envoy of Prussia to the Diet of Frankfurt expressed himself to the same effect. His name was Otto von Bismarck. An accomplished equestrian may ride a prancing, curveting horse without stirrups or whip; every one who mounts a restless steed in the same manner is not, therefore, necessarily an accomplished equestrian. As a consequence, the dislike of his fellow-diplomatists that fell to Bismarck's lot at the beginning of his career fell to Chateaubriand's at the end of his. They laughed his pretensions, even as an ordinary diplomatist, to scorn, alleging, and not unjustly, that he had failed as yet to master the rudiments of the craft; but when he claimed to have been the guiding-spirit of the Conclave that elected Pius VIII. to the See of St. Peter, left vacant by the death of Leo XII., the laughter changed into positive and strident notes of contumely, which found an echo in France. All this did not prevent Chateaubriand from perpetuating his illusions on that and many other subjects in his Memoirs (*Mémoires* *d'Outre-tombe*), where, to confine ourselves strictly to the question under consideration, he alludes several times to Pius VIII. as 'My Pope.' In reality, Xavier-Francesco de Castiglione was elected by the Sacred College because the majority of its members felt convinced that a period of transition in the affairs of the Holy See was impending, and that a Pontificate of probably short duration would under the circumstances be the fittest. That they were not altogether wrong in their calculations was proved by events: Pius VIII. only reigned twenty months. During that short reign, however, the Sovereign Pontiff gave at least one proof positive of not having one thought in common with the self-alleged factor of his election, as far as the dynastic and political future of France was concerned; he authorised the French bishops to take the oath of allegiance to 'the usurper,' as Chateaubriand considered Louis Philippe to be.

Enough with regard to Chateaubriand. 'Une fois n'est pas coutume,' says the homely French proverb; and the failure of one great poet to make his mark as a legislator and diplomatist does not altogether constitute a logical argument against a second or a third one attempting to reverse such a failure. One test, however convincing in appearance, does not wholly satisfy earnest men of science; and there is no reason why poets, endeavouring to realise their ideals, should be more ready to believe. One easily forgives, then, the ambition of some of the most noteworthy of Chateaubriand's fellow-poets which impelled them towards the Palais-Bourbon; but there comes a time when experiments that have been proved absolutely barren of results should finally cease, and seventy years of such experiments is assuredly a respectable probationary period. Great, therefore, was the people's surprise when, at the end of that period, and after the Marcus Curtius-like political suicide of Paul Déroulède—also a poet of no mean order—they beheld François Coppée advancing towards the chasm which had, moreover, long ago swallowed both Lamartine and Victor Hugo, and would assuredly have swallowed Béranger, Dumas the elder, and Eugène Sue, had they not, by a timely back-jump, retreated from the brink. Coppée's advance on that perilous road was all the more puzzling, inasmuch as he had never fostered any illusions as to the inevitable fate of the poet endeavouring to reduce his ethical conceptions to practice by means of a seat in the legislature of his country. 'If I were offered a parliamentary candidature, I should decline it, while protesting at the indignity put upon me,' he wrote more than six years and a half ago, when a rumour spread about his having been invited to stand. His letter, of which the above is the first sentence, is worth quoting in full. It throws a lambent light, not only on the poet's want of fitness for a legislator's mission, but on the cause whence that unfitness springs.

'I went twice or thrice to the Palais-Bourbon,' continued Coppée, 'and that tumultuous gathering produced upon me the impression of an ill-kept class-room; hence, I refuse to go and wear out the seats of my trousers (*mes fonds de* *pantalon*) on those benches like an old schoolboy. Assuredly, a poet does not count for much in modern society, and doubtless I have but a feeble claim to the title; but even if there should be among the many poems I have written only one short piece, the reading of which should elevate the imagination of a young man or cause a grisette to dream, I should consider that single drop of true poesy distilled from my heart as a work more precious and more essential than the most eloquent speech from the rostrum involving the voting of the capital law or determining a great event. Honestly speaking, where is the poet who would not sooner leave behind him the "Sonnet" of Arvers,[1] or "le Vase Brisé,"[2] than have spoken all the harangues of Mirabeau?

'As for those of our fellow-poets who want to fling themselves into the parliamentary slush, I wish them luck; but I am afraid they are exposing themselves to a good deal of disappointment and heartburning. I am, moreover, inclined to believe that the most famous among them will be left out in the cold. One may safely trust for that to the universal suffrage, which will not miss this opportunity of affirming once more its taste for mediocrities. Has universal suffrage ever chosen the foremost in their art or in their profession, who, as a rule, are endowed with a certain pride, and to whom, to say the least, universal suffrage would have been obliged to make a sign? The chamber swarms with Bovarys[3] and provincial *avocaillons*;[4] but there is no trace of any of the illustrious members of either the bar or the medical profession. It will be the same as regards authors. Leconte de Lisle is not even a senator; and if Zola should present himself, he would fail as did Renan.

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[1] Félix Arvers, the particulars of whose life are very scanty, and who died about 1850, leaving his name mainly attached to one sonnet, although he wrote many things perhaps equally worthy of being preserved.

[2] By Auguste Barbier, in his *Iambes et Poèmes*.

[3] The husband of Emma Bovary, the heroine of Flaubert's novel, who is represented as a bungling, ignorant surgeon.

[4] A term of reproach applied to pettifogging, obscure, and scheming barristers (*avocats*).

'My mind is, however, at rest in that respect. Zola is at bottom a man of sense and wisdom; he is, above all, an admirable glutton for work (*un admirable bourreau de travail*), who knows that he owes us his yearly novel. The whim for spouting with a glass of sugared water in front of him will pass, and inasmuch as he is passionately interested in social questions, let him give us another *Assommoir* or *Germinal*. As for myself, I can only repeat that my weekly paper suffices. Of course, I shall continue to put "my little word" into it (*à y dire mon petit mot*) on public affairs and public men, without ceremony on my part; but I shall do so with absolute independence; for it is sweet to feel free of bondage to any one, and to be uncontrolled like the wind. Ye gods, if I were a deputy, should I not have been obliged, like many honest people, alas! for the sake of demeanour, of *esprit de corps*, of party discipline, to swallow my own loathing at the unsavoury messes of Parliament? Could I have saluted, if the opportunity presented itself, the colours that waved at Austerlitz without being accused of conspiring for the restoration of Prince Victor, and without having it said that I was working for a future title of chamberlain, with the privilege of having a key embroidered on the back of my court coat? Frankly, do I impress people in that way? No, no; I am not going to swell that band of parliamentarians, who impress me as being rotten to the core, and of having singularly accelerated, during the last twenty years, the decline of my unhappy country. I, a deputy! Can you picture me, my friend,[1] wallowing "in the heart and soul of a Commission," and trying to "bowl over" ministers as one knocks down the figures of "Aunt Sally" (*du Jeu de Massacre*) of the Fair of Neuilly. I, who in spite of the wear and tear of life have preserved in my heart some previous scraps of tenderness and some spells of generous (chivalrous) wrath, I who have remained a kind of patriotic simpleton, shall I go and drown myself in the torrents of political saliva, at the risk of being confounded with the ruck of those impostors and those "speechifiers"? Never, never, as long as I live. I prefer my pen.—FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.'

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[1] The letter was written, if I am not mistaken, to M. Jean Bernard, the well-known painter.

The picture is not flattering to the parliamentary institutions of the Third Republic: my personal observations at the Palais-Bourbon during six consecutive years of attendance, both in the lobbies and in the foreign press gallery, compel me to admit that the picture is not overdrawn. It is not darker, though, than that drawn by Béranger of the parliamentary institutions of the Second Republic—albeit that Béranger's was thrown off in fewer lines. A short while after the revolution of February 1848 an English nobleman—not a commoner, so it could not have been Mr. (afterwards Sir) Richard Wallace—met the poet coming out of the Palais-Bourbon. They had known each other for many years on cordial but not intimate terms. 'I shall feel obliged,' said Béranger, 'by your seeing me home; I am not at all well; those violent scenes inside there'—pointing to the home of the Constituent Assembly—'are not at all to my taste.' Then, with a very wistful smile, he went on: 'I have been twitted with having held the plank across the brook which divided the Palais-Bourbon from the Tuileries; in other words, I have been accused of having helped Louis

Philippe to ascend the throne of France. I wish I could build the bridge across the Channel to enable him to return. Certainly, I should have liked a republic, but not such an one as we are having in there'—pointing for a second time to the building which he had just left. 'But,' remarked his companion, 'you ought to be pleased—you are fighting in the same regiment with Victor Hugo.' Béranger shook his head. 'He is not in the regiment,' he retorted; then, after a slight pause, 'he is in the band.' A few weeks later Béranger tendered his resignation as a deputy.

Yet there is no doubt about Béranger's having been the great political counsellor of his time, outside the parliaments which preceded those of the Second Republic. And by this I do not mean the adviser of the people, whom he loved with an all-absorbing devotion, like that of Jacques-Antoine Manuel, whose portrait, sketched by him (Béranger), might serve for his own :—

> 'Cœur, tête et bras, tout était peuple en lui.'

He was consulted by the leaders of thought whose names, rightly or wrongly, are inseparably connected with that period of France's history—I mean Benjamin Constant, Lafitte, Thiers, and even by men so widely differing from him as Talleyrand, Lamartine, and Lamennais. The first-named three scarcely took a step without inviting his opinion. At the revolution of 1830 Talleyrand expressed his desire for an interview with Béranger. The poet refused to set his foot in the mansion of the Rue St. Florentin, where the Restoration had been plotted; the diplomatist could not get up the ten flights of stairs leading to Béranger's fifth floor. The personal conference never took place, but there were frequent communications through intermediaries. By that time the opportunity for politically influencing Chateaubriand was past; nevertheless, in his constant money troubles, the incarnate patrician took the incarnate plebeian for his preferred guide, and the latter succeeded now and again in getting him out of the densest tangles of his embarrassments; to get him wholly out of the wood of insolvency was impossible. And all this was accomplished in the most charming, unaffected manner — without a show of temporary superiority. 'After all,' said Béranger, 'it is not his fault. The poor fellow has never been able to do without a valet to help him put his breeches on.'

Béranger used all his efforts to prevent Lamennais from flinging his gown to the winds. 'You have no right to cease being a priest. To leave the Church in your case would not be an abdication, it would be desertion,' he said. Lamennais would not listen on that point; but in all other things he accepted Béranger's guidance.

So did Lamartine. I shall not attempt to write his political and parliamentary biography, any more than I attempted to write Chateaubriand's or Béranger's. It will not be difficult, however, to show that if he was not altogether as great a statesman as he was a poet, he had, at any rate, a lofty conception of the former's duties, and that in trying to reduce them to practice he was not altogether a bungler like Chateaubriand. He had enormous powers of assimilation, as the following curious fact will show. The discussion of a grand project for a canal was down in the agenda of the Chamber. The deputy intrusted with the principal speech in its favour fell ill on the very morning of the debate. The parties interested were advised to intrust Lamartine with the task of defending the scheme. At their arrival at his house they were told that he was in his bath; nevertheless they were asked to come in, and, after waiting a little while, were ushered into the bathroom, their host still in the position in which Marat was murdered by Charlotte Corday, and in which, according to Alexandre Dumas the elder, Baron Taylor, of the Comédie Française, was nearly done to death by an obstinate author bent upon reading a five-act tragedy to him. The practice of receiving visitors, and especially petitioners, in that manner must have been very common with Frenchmen of note during the 'thirties and 'forties. I heard it frequently alluded to retrospectively when I was a boy, by which time, however, the practice had gone out.

After listening most attentively to his visitors, Lamartine shook his head. 'I do not know a single word of the business; there is not a man in the Chamber more ignorant of civil engineering than I,' he said. His interlocutors refused to be dismissed like that, and finally prevailed upon him to be coached, adding, by way of encouragement, that a man like him could master any subject in an hour or two. They proceeded to coach him while he was dressing, and during the luncheon to which he invited them, and in the afternoon Lamartine delivered a business speech which on all sides was voted a marvel of clearness and accuracy. Everybody was surprised, except Lamartine himself. 'I have been aware for many years of a certain capacity for mastering details,' he said; 'but the people and the Chamber have hitherto refused to believe in that capacity because I happen to write verses. If the verses were utterly bad, they would, perhaps, not have been so obdurate. Unfortunately, there are some good ones—nay, some beautiful ones—amongst them. That 's what has ruined me in their opinion.'

It would not be easy, from the poet's point, to put the case into a smaller compass. From what I have read, I honestly believe that Lamartine considered a great statesman to be the superior of a great poet. Béranger, with all his modesty, never went as far as that; and as for Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo, doubtless greater than Béranger, they would have been struck with amazement at the whisper of such a comparison to the poet's disadvantage. From what I remember, neither Chateaubriand nor Hugo ever descended from their Parnassus in order to discuss coolly the 'for' or 'against' of any measure of permanent importance. Lamartine, in that respect, was always in the breach with weapons which, inlaid though they were like the others', were not simply ornamental, or only fit for aimless volley-firing into the air; they carried as far as, and often farther than, the statistically over-loaded but nevertheless unornamental barrels of the matter-of-fact and prosaic legislators; they carried so far as to land their missiles virtually beyond the visual range of many of his contemporaries; but the missiles, nevertheless, hit a real target, albeit that it was invisible to the contemporaries. It was Lamartine who defended railways against Arago, and, if I am not mistaken, against Thiers. It was Lamartine who endeavoured to stop constantly recurring sterile discussions in the Chamber by one pithy sentence which has become historical: 'I warn the Chamber that France is being bored to death!'

To complete his portrait by another sentence of his, which showed his own aspirations as a statesman, 'Oh,' he exclaimed one day, 'the joy of being a Napoleon, less the sword!' If the sentence meant anything, it meant the ambition of guiding a great nation by the forces of thought, justice, pity, and generosity, without the shedding of their blood or of the alien's in order to dazzle them with victories; or, to use the antithesis to Napoleon's words quoted at the beginning of this paper, it meant the ambition of keeping the body politic in such perfect health as to render it invulnerable to the germs of revolutionary fever, and consequently independent of the narcotics—or intoxicants—of military glory. Lamartine, moreover, positively pursued the visionary idea for sixteen long years, during the last three months of which he laid the flattering unction to his soul that he was within a measurable distance of its realisation. The insurrection of June 1848 dispelled his illusions for evermore. The Second Republic, the offspring of this disciple of Plato, was maimed before it was fairly out of its swaddling-clothes by that ruthless practitioner, Cavaignac, in order to save its life. The father left the puling infant to its fate, lest by his own régime he should once more endanger its existence, and retired to his study, whence he did not emerge again. Meanwhile the child, already bodily crippled, and an incipient raving lunatic besides, dragged a miserable infancy along, maimed a second time by Changarnier, and experimented upon by the predecessors of those Bovarys alluded to in such scornful terms by François Coppée, until, three years and nine months after its birth, it was finally strangled by its supposed head nurse, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

Then the Bovarys shouted 'Murder!' forgetting, or pretending to forget, that the child had never been more than a wreck, unsound in body and mind, and, moreover, afflicted with an infectious revolutionary fever which threatened to communicate itself to its mother, France.

The Bovary who shouted loudest was a theorist of the first water, a self-appointed occupant of the chair of Chief Lecturer on political medicine and surgery to the Chamber; and he penned an indictment against the child-murderer, and called it 'L'Histoire d'un Crime.' I am referring to Victor Hugo. What Harvey said of Bacon, viz. 'he wrote science like a chancellor,' posterity will say with regard to his (Hugo's) pronouncements as a statesman and legislator.

The most wonderful President, and at the same time the wittiest, that ever directed the debates of the Chamber of Deputies, namely, Dupin the elder, anticipated posterity in that respect. He told Hugo more than once that all the adversaries he pretended to overcome, all the objections he wished to override, had no existence except in his (Hugo's) imagination. I have no space left to cite any of the 'motived' calls to order by which Dupin virtually reduced Hugo to silence before the Coup d'État made an end of his political career. Sue, at the beginning of his, dearly loved a lord, and had no more true sympathy with the aspirations of the democracy than any other tuft-hunter and snob. The opening chapters of *Les Mystères de Paris* were written without his having the slightest idea that their publication in serial form would cause him to be hailed as a social reformer. It was M. Considérant, the editor of *La Démocratie Pacifique*, who thus hailed him. His remarks did not fall upon deaf ears, and after *Le Juif Errant*, Sue stood for one of the metropolitan constituencies. Elected in 1848 he naturally took his seat among the 'lefts,' and on the first day of his new functions he placed himself by the side of Victor Hugo. How prone the latter was at all times to speak, and how little prone to listen, may be gathered from the following incident. While he was chatting with Sue the Chamber was discussing a bill of some kind; and in a little while the poet, to the great surprise of the novelist, held up his hand, then rose and voted. 'Did you hear what the last speaker said?' asked Sue. 'I did not hear a single word,' was the answer; 'but it's easy enough to vote in my case. I am guided by this little gentleman in spectacles facing you. He virtually tells me which way to vote. As we are invariably of a different opinion, I remain seated if he gets up, and when he remains seated I get up on trust. He listens for both of us.'

Eugène Sue took his mission more *au sérieux*, although those in whose behalf he professed to speak never ceased to make sport of him. The people refused to believe in the sudden conversion of the former hanger-on of the aristocracy of the Faubourg St. Germain. On the day of the Coup d'État he protested energetically against the decrees, and Morny placed his name on the list of representatives to be arrested. Louis Napoleon himself put his pen through the name, remembering that Sue was his mother's godson. Sue declined to profit by this clemency, and, in company with other deputies, gave himself up at the Fort of Vanves. He and they deliberately courted persecution; they did not even flee when none pursueth; and the race of those 'martyrs pour rire' has not entirely died out. At the promulgation of the 'law of exile' Sue looked in vain for his name on the list. Louis Napoleon had struck it off for the second time, and equally for the second time Sue declined the favour which he regarded as an insult, and went into voluntary exile. Both he and Hugo rejected all offers of amnesty; they were too fond of the glamour supposedly accruing from their banishment willingly to abandon it. In

Sue's case the banishment was wholly voluntary from the beginning, and in Hugo's case it was self-inflicted after a few years. Nevertheless Hugo was never tired of informing his visitors and his readers of the melancholy thoughts with which the contemplation of the Ocean (?), separating him from his country, inspired him. In his 'Introduction' to the translation of Shakespeare by his son, Hugo paints himself as strolling on the sands with the latter, and now and again casting a mournful look at the house that was henceforth to shelter them. 'What think you of this exile?' asks the son. 'I think it will be a long one,' is the answer. 'What will you do?' is the second question. 'I shall contemplate the Ocean,' replies the father. And so on for several pages.

There is no one who has more graphically than Napoleon III. summed up the character of Hugo as a would-be legislator, hampered and tripped up at every step by his poetical finery. In obedience to that ever inexorable condition of space I must omit the portrait drawn by the Emperor. I may, however, refer the reader to the book, which also contains a vignette of Lamartine drawn by the same hand, or rather spoken by the same lips—for the Emperor himself never reduced either of those sketches to writing.[1] There is no one who so ruthlessly stripped Hugo of the finery itself as Dumas the elder, during a visit to Hauteville House, at Guernsey, already mentioned.

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[1] See *Undercurrents of the Second Empire*, pp. 32 *et seq.* London: William Heinemann. 1897.

A poet—for Dumas was a poet—who shows a tendency to treat ethical questions in such a *terre-à-terre* manner might, on the face of it, prove an acquisition to any Legislature, provided he could suit himself to the tricks and compromises inseparable from Government by party, but notably inseparable from all republican government. Unlike François Coppée, Dumas did not actually profess his contempt for those tricks and compromises, he merely professed his contempt for the electors who sent men to parliament capable of resorting to them, of electors setting the example by their own unfair 'heckling' and browbeating of honest and outspoken candidates. In 1847 he solicited the suffrages of St Germain, which erstwhile royal residence he had benefited much by his stay there. St. Germain considered him immoral and denied him. The following year, after the abdication of Louis Philippe, he proposed to stand for Joigny, and told some most unpleasant truths to a M. de Bonnelière, who twitted him with being an aristocrat in disguise, and what was worse, an ungrateful aristocrat. When the meeting broke up a couple of other electors, who had annoyed him all the evening, followed him into the street. He simply flung them into the river, just to show them that his aristocratic grip was able to cope with their plebeian insolence. Before he went to rest that night Dumas determined not to pursue his electioneering campaign.

The latest proof of a poet's failure as a legislator is Paul Déroulède's, whose career I should have liked to sketch at length, if for no other reason than to dispel the erroneous opinions that prevail about him in England. For the moment this is impossible. This much, however, I may be allowed to state. I knew Paul Déroulède, though not intimately, long before he entered the French parliament. I differ from him on every conceivable point; yet I know not a more honest man and a more sincere patriot in or out of the Palais-Bourbon. His attempt to overthrow the Third Republic, not in favour of a monarchy or an empire, but in order to reconstruct it, was also prompted by loathing of the men who have lorded it over France for nearly thirty years. I felt glad to think that François Coppée had abandoned his intention of contesting the seat rendered vacant by Déroulède's banishment. France's legislators and France's poets should be kept strictly apart, for their ideas will not mix any better than water and oil. Nicolas de la Reynie, the first Lieutenant-General of Police France had, was both a poet and legislator: a poet in the sense that he loved poetry; a legislator in his attempts—and often successful attempts—at stamping out flagrant abuses. He was obliged to suppress some of the original editions of Molière's plays, but he took good care to preserve the primitive texts.

My gladness at François Coppée's change of mind was, however, of short duration. He has taken to agitating outside the Chamber, and making foolish speeches in the guise of quasi-patriotic harangues. What is worse, he is writing political pamphlets.

Here are the opening lines of his latest, *Le Devoir Nouveau.*

> 'Oui, je les vois hocher la tête,
> Mes compagnons du temps ancien,
> Et s'étonner que le poète
> Veuille finir en citoyen.
> Je sais qu'ils ne m'approuvent guère,
> Et qu'ils ont froncé le sourcil,
> Quand j'ai pris ma plume de guerre
> Ainsi qu'on empoigne un fusil.'

Coppée could not have described the disgust and the sorrow of his companions of yore better if he had tried ever so hard. I never had the honour of being one of his companions, I was only an admirer, but I share the disgust and the sorrow. I would sooner have seen him take his seat in the Palais-Bourbon. As it is, he reminds me of that Scotch minister who refused to repeat in the pulpit a ribald song he had heard the previous night. 'I will not sully my lips with it,' he said, 'but I'll let my clerk whistle it to you.' Mercier in the Senate, and a dozen members of the Chamber of Deputies, are whistling for Coppée the ribald song of anti-Semitism and political hatred.

Even Chateaubriand was preferable, for he preached his abominable doctrines himself. The poet should not be a legislator; still less should he be a firebrand in the cause of persecution.

INDEX

ABOUT, M. Edmond, 123.
Adam, Mme. Edmond, 225.
Affair, the Carrel-Girardin, 245-257.
Agamemnon, 21.
Agenars, 155.
Alexander I. 283.
Alexander II., 31, 32, 33, 226.
Ambert, 251, 254, 256.
Andlau, General Comte d', 216.
Andrieux, M., 160, 162.
Angoulême, Duc d', 253.
Apponyi, Count, 42.
Apuller, 103.
Arago, Emmanuel, 146, 294.
—— Etienne, 64, 175, 176, 294.
Arc, Joan of, 118.
Arohnson, M., 99, 100.
Arthenay, 102.
Arvers, Félix, 287.
Assembly, the National, 39, 44, 69, 74, 134, 141, 142, 189; Convocation of, 195, 232, 239.
Auber, 55.
Audigier, Henri, 273.
Aumale, Duc d', 3, 26, 27, 133, 201, 204-206, 208, 210-218.
Austria, Francis-Joseph of, 31, 283.
Auvergne, Prince de la Tour d', 52.

BACON, Francis, 295.
Bakounine, 161.
Baleste, 253.
Balzac, Honoré, 79, 191, 196, 224.
Balmain, 41.
Baraguey-d'Hilliers, Marshal, 48.
Barbès, 126.
Barbier, Auguste, 287.
Barra, Joseph, 182.
Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, 8, 197.
Barresnil, M., 88.
Basire, 24.
Bassompière, 93.
Bazaine, Marshal, 102, 210.
Beauharnais, General, 100.
—— Hortense de, 167.
Beauqeney, 119.
Beauvoir, 162.
Beckmann, 228.
Bedeau, General, 134.
Belfort, 111.
Belle-Isle-en-Mer, 185.
Benne, Comte de, 260.
Béranger, 51, 265, 286, 289-291, 293.
Bernard, Jean, 288.
—— Martin, 126.
Berri, Duc de, 183.
—— Duchesse de, 41.
Berryer, 221.
Besançon, 111, 160.
Bertrand, Napoleon, 276.
Bidassoa, battalion of the, 253.
Bigot, M., 17.
Biron, General, 100.
Bismarck, 1, 2, 21, 25, 30, 52, 63, 64, 83, 88, 90, 105, 122, 134, 168, 173, 207, 223, 228, 230, 240, 284.
Blanc, Louis, 4, 40, 84, 151, 249.
Blanqui, Auguste, 67, 68.
Blois, 119; the Bridge at, 83.
Blümenthal, 25.
Bonaparte, General, 18, 115.
—— Louis Napoleon, *Œuvres Complètes*, de, 23.
—— Prince Pierre, 155, 189.
Bonnetière, M. de, 299.
Bonnières, M. Robert de, 113.
Bordeaux, 77, 114, 142, 144; Convocation of the National Assembly at, 195.

Bordeaux, Hotel de, 78, 80, 81, 89, 121, 122, 133, 134, 137, 138, 156.
Bosquet, General, 115.
Bossu, Le, 130.
Boulanger, General, 241-243.
Bourbaki, 102, 104, 105-113.
Bourbon, the House of, 93, 157, 183, 184, 208, 252.
—— the Palais-, 24, 286, 289, 300, 301.
Bourbons, De Buonaparte et des, 281.
Brossard, 185, 186.
Brunswick, Duke of, 95.
Buffet, 16, 232.
Bugeaud, Marshal, 202.
Bulgaria, Prince Ferdinand of, 207.
Bulwer, Sir Henry Lytton, 276.
Burns, 98.
Busson, 127.

CABARRUS, Dr., 276.
Caderousse, Duc de Gramont-, 81, 122.
Cadoudal, Georges, 185.
Calabria, Duke of, 156.
Cambriels, General, 102, 103, 104.
Cambronne, 106.
Caraguel, Clément, 151.
Carcassone, 154.
Carnot, Lazare, 71, 76, 81, 102, 143, 244.
Carrel, Armand, 245-257.
Carrier, 101.
Cassagnac, Paul de, 83.
Castlenau, 25.
Castiglione, Countess de, 227.
Cataclysm, the, of 1789-94, 20.
Cathelineau, M. 96, 97.
Cauchois-Lemaire, 248.
Caux, Marquis de, 122.
Cavaignac, 33, 38, 209, 222, 255, 272, 276, 295.
Cavalier, 89.
Cavour, 223.
Challemel-Lacour, 130, 157-166.
Chamber, the Upper, 281, 282.
Chambord, Comte de, 96, 143, 181, 211.
Changarnier, General, 38, 135, 175, 209, 222, 255, 295.
Chanoz, 160.
Chanzy, 71, 102.
Chapelle, La, 118.
Charette, M. de, 96, 97.
Charivari, Le, 140.
Charles VII., 92.
—— X., 20, 185, 186, 280.
Charras, Colonel, 193.
Chartres, Duc de, 3, 26, 49, 119, 133, 201-218.
Chateaubriand, 266, 278, 279-285, 293, 301.
Chateaudun, battle of, 99.
Chaudordy, Count de, 52, 53, 54, 60, 86.
Chenier, Marie-Joseph, 278.
Chenonceaux, 81, 123.
Chesnelong, M., 181.
Chigi, Mgr., 86.
Chouans, the, 182, 184.
Christianisme, Génie du, 279.
Church, Sir Edward, 253.
Cinq-Mars, 220.
Cissey, General Ernest Comtot de, 236-238.
Clémenceau, 213.
Clémentine, Princesse, 207.
Clinchant, General, 111.
Cluseret, 159.
Cochery, 81, 137.
Cochrane, Lord, 253.
Commune, the, 33, 47, 67, 69, 70, 84, 136, 154; of Lyons, 165.
Communes, Moniteur des, 178, 179.
Condé, 277.
Conference, the London, 143.
Considérant, M., 296.
Constant, Benjamin, 290.
Consulat et Empire, 41.
Convention, the, 100.
Coppée, François, 286, 295-299.
Coquerel, Athanasius, 199.
Corbière, 115.
Corday, Charlotte, 101, 292.
Corneille, 278, 280.
Coulmiers, 115.
Coup d'État, 19, 84, 134, 149, 155, 175, 296, 297.
Cousin, Victor, 182, 188.
Crémieux, 12, 23, 24, 44, 45; sketch of, 49, 50; at Tours, 51-61; 64, 76,

86, 97, 108, 117, 137, 139, 146, 148, 156, 160, 170, 175.
Crémieux, Mme., 51, 52, 54, 58.
Cromwell, 22.
Cubières, General de, 209.
Cumberland, Stewart, 241-243.
Custine, General, 100.

DANTON, 3.
Darel, 261, 262.
Darimon, Alfred, 192, 194.
Daru, 278.
David, Jérome, 11.
Defence, the National, 1, 3, 4, 11, 16, 20, 23, 24, 26, 30, 31, 40, 44, 45, 46, 52, 53, 57, 59, 65, 67, 69, 72, 75, 82, 101, 104, 108, 135, 140, 142, 159, 164, 178.
Delegation, the, of Foreign Affairs, 53.
Delegation, the Tours, 48, 85, 86, 108, 109, 153.
Delescluze, 6, 170.
Deputies, the Chamber of, 10, 14, 17, 18, 40, 125, 127, 136, 171, 226, 233, 241, 292, 293, 294, 296, 300.
Déroulède, Paul, 286, 299, 300.
Deslandis, 138.
Desmarels, 221.
Dijon, 112.
Dillon, Comte de, 241.
Disraeli, Benjamin, 86, 272.
Dôle, 111, 112, 128.
Dominique, Rue St., 114.
Donchery, 25, 63.
Dora, 219, 223, 227, 230, 235.
Dorian, 67, 76.
Dosne, Mlle., 36, 42, 212.
Doublé, 160.
Drouais, Mme., 3.
Dudevant, Mme. (Georges Sand) 123, 124.
Duel, the Dujarrier-Beauvalon, 254.
Duerot, 71.
Dufaure, 38.
Dumas, the Elder, Alexandre, 125, 185, 219, 263, 265, 266, 268, 292, 298, 299.
Dupin, 199, 296.
Dutacq, 247, 248.

ELIOT, George, 218.
Empire, the Second, 1, 4, 7, 18, 33, 40, 41, 48, 49, 51, 66, 67, 73, 84, 95, 105, 110, 122, 130, 137, 139, 150, 152, 167, 168-179, 239, 240.
Enghien, Duc d', 157.
Epinal, 102.
Errant, Le Juif, 296.
Esquiros, Alphonse, 149; at Marseilles, 151-157; 163.
Estancelin, Louis Charles, 8, 14, 15, 17.
Eugénie, the Empress, 7, 15, 16, 19, 52, 105, 136, 173, 261.

FABVIER, Colonel, 253.
Faidherbe, 71, 110.
Farcy 188.
Farre, 237.
Favre, Jules, 1, 6, 7-11, 14, 18, 21, 24, 26-29, 34, 41, 42, 46, 52, 56, 64, 67, 68, 101, 137, 142, 143, 170, 176, 194.
Fayette, La, 93, 133.
Fechter, Charles, 90.
Ferry, Jules, 17, 20, 21, 64, 68, 76, 161, 176, 181, 197.
Fesch, Cardinal, 172.
Feuillide, Capo de, 248.
Figaro, Le, 241.
Flaubert, 287.
Flers, General, 100.
Fleurus, the victory of, 101.
Fleury, General, 204, 205, 208.
Flô, General le, 134-137, 170.
Floquet, 127, 176, 197.
Forge, Anatole de la, 101, 104.
Fort, General le, 49.
Fouché, 221.
Fould, Achille, 10, 202.
Fouquet, 185.
Flourens, Gustave, 67, 70.
Fourichon, Admiral, 23, 44, 45; sketch of, 47-49; 55-59, 64, 75, 103, 107, 117, 139, 170.
Foy, General, 266.
'France, the Saviours of,' 1, 20, 54.
Frankfurt, the Diet of, 284.
— the Treaty of, 111.
Frederick the Great, 277.
Frederick Charles, Prince, 115.

Freycinet, M. de, 81, 82, 87, 102, 106, 112-116, 148, 156, 241.

GALLIFET, General, 14, 70.
Gambetta, Léon, 3, 4; sketch of, 5; 8, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24;—*v.* Thiers, 26-43; at Tours, 44-46, 57-61; and the Tours régime, 62-94; 98, 101-120, 127, 131, 133; deposition of, 137-147; 148, 152, 156, 164, 176, 177, 179, 197, 209, 225, 233.
Garcin, Captain, 70.
Gardonne, Countesse de, 227.
Garel, Louis, 165.
Garnier-Pagès, 12, 46, 146.
Garibaldi, 103, 112, 217.
Gaulois, Le, 198, 233, 243.
Gavarni, 91.
Gazette des Tribunaux, La, 257.
Gensonné, 101.
Gent, M., 84, 85.
Gérard, 265.
Gil-Blas, Le, 234.
Girardin, General Alexandre de, 260, 263.
— Mme. Alexandre de, 261.
— Delphine de, 272-276.
— Emile de, 228, 245-277.
— Mme. de, 271, 272.
— Saint Marc, 187.
Glais-Bizoin, 12, 23, 24, 44, 45; sketch of, 46; 52; at Tours, 54-61; 75, 76, 81, 96-103, 107, 108, 116, 117, 137, 148, 156, 162, 170, 174.
Goltz, 239.
Goriot, le Père, 191, 196.
Gortschakoff, Prince, 32.
Gramont, Duc de, 81.
Granville, Lord, 29, 30, 31.
Grégoire, Achille, 255-257.
Grévy, Jules, 29; at Tours, 81, 88, 89, 93; sketch of, 122-133; 138, 158, 202, 233.
Grose, Francis, 98.
Guards, the Marseilles National, 151, 154, 156.
— the Paris National, 13, 66.
— the National, of Touraine, 92.
Guéronnière, Vicomte de la, 153.
Guesclin, Du, 258.
Gueydon, Admiral, 202.
Guibert, Mgr., 59.
Guimont, Esther, 221, 227.
Guinot, Eugène, 273.
Guizot, 42, 142, 158, 187, 206, 221, 244.
Guyot-Montpayroux, M., 137, 138.

HALS, Franz, 273.
Harcourt, Mme. d', 225.
Harel, 207.
Harvey, 295.
Hastings, Colonel, 253.
Haussemann, Baron, 155.
Haussonville, Comte d', 280.
Havin, M., 192.
Healy, Mr., 6.
Hénon, Dr., 160.
Henri III., 123.
Henri IV., 12.
Herbert of Cherbury, Lord, 110, 252.
Héricourt, 112, 113.
Hérold, 128.
Horloger, Le Chapeau d'un, 273.
Houchard, 100.
House, Hauteville, 267, 298.
Houssaye, Arsène, 183.
Hugo, Victor, 3, 4, 5, 26, 40, 61, 77, 149, 265, 266, 267, 286, 290, 293, 295, 296-298.

IDEVILLE, Comte Henri d', 201, 204, 205.
Imperial, the Prince, 28, 161, 173, 260.
Ironworks, the Creuzot, 9.

JEANJOT, Dr., 25.
Jerrold, Douglas, 253.
Jewel, Bishop, 155.
Joinville, Prince de, 3, 26, 27, 38, 39, 119, 133, 204, 205, 208-218.
Josephine, the Empress, 261.
Jourdain, 253,
Jourdan, 101.
Journalists, the King of the, 245-277.
Juarez, Benito, 61, 159.
Jung, General, 234-236.

KARR, Alphonse, 89.
Kaulla, Baroness de, 236-238.
Kean, Edmund, 90.
Keller, M., 104.

Kérouailles, Louise de, 227.
Kératry, Comte de, 135, 136, 158.

LAFITTE, 290.
Lamartine, 20, 38, 46, 51, 76, 209, 259, 265-268, 272, 276, 286, 290-294, 298.
Lamennais, 290, 291.
Lamoricière, General, 38, 134, 222.
Lamotte-Rouge, General de, 102.
Lanfrey, 245, 258.
Larousse, 21, 111, 159.
Launoy, Jean de, 134.
Launay, Vicomte de, 273.
Laurier, Clément, 40, 52-54, 96, 132, 156.
Lautour-Mézerai, 257.
Lavertujon, 193.
Lebon, 101.
Lebraton, Mme., 105.
Ledru-Rollin, 4, 38, 40, 46, 85, 152.
Legouvé, Ernest, 267, 268.
Leroux, Alfred, 10.
Leo XIII., 284.
Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 152.
Levert, Mme., 153.
Levy, Mr. J. M., 246.
Lherminier, 187.
Liancourt, Duc de, 74.
Liouville, M., 146.
Liponski, 99.
Lisle, Leconte de, 288.
Lissagaray, M. de, 83.
Littré, 50, 200.
Loan, the Morgan, 53.
Lorme, Marion de, 227.
Louis XIII., 93, 220.
Louis XIV., 41, 99, 185, 220.
Louis XV., 93, 220.
Louis XVI., 73, 182, 278.
Louis XVIII., 20, 66, 106, 115, 221, 280, 281, 282, 283.
Louis Philippe, 20, 26, 36, 37, 39, 42, 66, 132, 158, 168, 169, 185, 186, 201-222, 266, 267, 290, 299.
Louvel, 183.
Lowe, Hudson, 41,
Lyons, 158-162.
Lyons, Lord, 30, 86, 89.

MACAULAY, 256,
Machiavelli, 47.
MacMahon, Marshal, 33, 122, 191, 209, 238.
Macready, 90.
Mailfer, Citizen, 183.
Mania, the Spy, 219-244.
Manuel, Jacques-Antoine, 290.
Marat, 101, 292.
Mari, Une Femme qui déteste son, 273.
Marivaux, 129, 227.
Martin, Albert, 46.
Mathilde, Princess, 177.
Matron, the Marseillaise, 91, 92.
Maubeuge, 3.
Maupas, M. de, 22, 276.
Mauri, Cardinal, 115.
Maximilian, the Emperor, 157.
Mazarin, 220.
Medici, Catherine de, 123.
Mentana, the battle of, 103, 217.
Mercier, Sébastien, 24, 301.
Metternich, Prince, 42, 86, 239.
Metz, 105, 109, 110, 115, 135.
Michelet, 24.
Millière, Jean-Baptiste, 70, 74.
Mirabeau, 6, 73, 135, 287.
Molé, 222.
Moltke, 25, 83, 242.
Molière, 66, 90, 300.
Monarchists, the Moderate Constitutional, 37.
Mont-sous-Vaudrey, 128.
Montchenu, 41.
Montespan, Mme. de, 220.
Montesquieu, 222.
Montjoyeux, M. de, 131.
Moor, Karl, 65.
Morny, Duc de, 7, 8, 9, 130, 131, 209, 297.
Mouchy, Duchesse de, 104.
Musset, Alfred de, 123-125.
Musset, Paul de, 124, 125, 126.

NAPOLEON I., 19, 22, 35, 41, 76, 106, 114, 115, 127, 183, 208, 278, 281, 282, 294.
Napoleon III., 2, 4, 7, 10, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 33, 37, 38, 39, 66, 67, 84, 104, 110, 127, 134, 135, 148-150, 155, 159, 161, 167-179, 208,

215, 222, 239, 255, 260, 279, 295, 297.
Narambon, 160.
National, Le, 250, 253, 255.
Nayl, the brothers, 185.
Nemours, Duc de, 39, 133.
Ney, Michel, 106.
Nigra, 86, 239.
Nisard, Désiré, 187.
Noir, Victor, 155, 189.
Nordau, Max, 228, 259.
Nordez, M. le, 78.
Normanby, Lord, 20.
Nouveau, Le Devoir, 301.
Novelists, the King of, 266.

O'CONNELL, Daniel, 6.
Okonneff, 86.
Ollivier, Emile, 73, 104, 132, 193, 195,
Orange, Prince of, 122.
Orleans, 114, 119.
Orléans, Duc d', 27.
Orléans, the House of, 8, 26-28, 132, 208, 209, 212.
Orsay, Count d', 47.
Orx, Comte d', 260.

PACCHIAROTTI, 253.
Pacifique, La Démocratie, 296.
Pagello, Dr., 124.
Paladines, Aurelles de, 12, 102, 115, 116, 117.
Palikao, General Cousin-Montauban, Comte de, 10, 12, 18, 19.
Palix, 160.
Pallières, Martin de, 72, 82.
Paris, An Englishman in, notes from, 83, 254, 257, 267.
Paris, Comte de, 9, 27, 143, 209-212.
Paris Journal, Le, 234.
Paris, Les Mystères de, 296.
Paris, surrender of, 144.
Parisiennes, Les Lettres, 273.
Partridge, 269.
Patay, 119.
Patti, Adelina, 122,
Pelletan, Camille, 213.
Pelletan, Eugène, 12, 146, 151, 213, 214.
Pélouze, M. 88.
Pélouze, Mme., 81, 83, 88, 90, 122, 127, 137.
Pereira, M., 118.
Persat, Maurice, 252, 253, 256, 261.
Peur, La Joie fait, 273.
Phillippet, 126.
Picard, 20, 21, 131, 142.
Pietri, M., 19.
Piré, Marquis de, 17.
Pius VIII., 284, 285.
Poitiers, Diane de, 81, 123.
Presse, La, 245, 247, 258, 268, 276.
Prieur, 81.
Prosecution, the Baudin, 6.
Proust, Antonin, 3, 77.
Prussia, Frederick William of, 283.
—— resistance to, 95-120.
—— Wilhelm II. of, 243.
Psaphon, King, 80.
Public, Comité du Salut, 160, 162, 163.
Pyat, Félix, 67, 68.

QUENTIN, St. 101, 104.
Quignot, 126.
Quinet, Edgar, 4.

RACINE, 278, 280.
Rampont, M. 88.
Ranc, 5.
Randon, Marshal, 239.
Rapp, General, 172.
Raspail, 38.
Régence, Café de la, 123, 124.
Regnier, 105.
Rembrandt, 273.
Renan, Ernest, 55, 130, 190, 197, 198, 288.
Renneville, Mme. de, 225.
Republic, the First, 41, 45, 81.
——, the Second, 1, 20, 22, 33, 36, 45, 51, 67, 84, 208, 289, 290, 295.
——, the Third, 2, 9, 11, 16, 28, 36, 44, 45, 54, 74, 97, 109, 120, 122, 123, 127, 130, 133, 154, 157, proclaimed, 158-166; 168-179, 191, 195, 197, 208, 240, 277, 289, 300.
République, Bulletin de la, 178, 179.
Restoration, the Second, 281, 290.
Review, The Fortnightly, 195.
Revolution, the First, 180, 182.
——, the Irish, 126.

Revolution, the Princes of the, 132.
Reynie, General Nicolas de la, 220, 300.
Richard, Albert, 161.
Richards, the, 93.
Richelieu, 220, 283.
Rivarol, 20, 131, 153.
Roberts, Lord, 19.
Robespierre, 3, 52, 61, 74, 101, 140.
Rochefort, Henri, 1, 2, 21, 24, 41, 135, 153, 176.
Rossi, Pelegrino, 187.
Rotron, 66.
Rouvier, Maurice, 151, 153, 163.
Royer-Collard, Hippolyte, 187.
Rubens, 273.

SADI, 55.
Sadowa, 239, 240.
Saint-Just, 100, 140.
Saint Simon, Duc de, 93.
Sardou, Victorien, 9, 219, 223, 227, 230, 233, 234.
Sartines, 220.
—— the Panama, 153, 169.
Saubot-Dambergez, M., 145.
Scandal, the Caffarel, 44, 216.
Scherer, Edmond, 181.
Schiller, 65.
Schneider, M., 7, 8, 10,
Schwartz, Berthold, 258.
Sedan, 3, 11, 19, 25, 26, 27, 71, 82, 83, 108, 133, 158, 159, 161, 177, 209.
Segur, Vicomte Joseph de, 180.
Seigneur, M. Georges, 17.
Semitism, Anti-, 94, 148.
Sens, le Bon, 248, 250.
September 4th, 1-25; 51, 87, 96, 101, 121, 131, 136, 141; provincial towns and the, 148-166; 175, 195.
Septembre, Souvenirs du Quatre, 147.
Sévigné, Mme. de, 273.
Siècle, Le, 247.
Simon, Jules, 24, 59, 64, 68, 145-147, 161, 170, 180-200.
Soult, Marshal, 274.
Spinola, 110, 252.
Spinoza, Baruch, 19.
Spuller, 5, 156.
Standard, The French National, 92, 93.
Stanhope, Colonel, 253.
Ste. Beuve, 187.
Ste. Hélènes, Guy de, 253.
Steenackers, M., 17, 49, 87, 88, 156.
Stofflet, M. de, 96, 97.
Strada, 220, 222.
Stürmer, 41.
Stuttgart, 242.
Sue, Eugène, 34, 286, 296, 297.
Suisse, father of Jules Simon, 182.

TACUSSEL, 160.
Talents, Cabinet of All the, 113.
Talhouet, Marquis de, 78.
Tallien, Mme., 276.
Talleyrand, 37, 42, 168, 210, 290.
Talma, 90, 283.
Tann, General von der, 115.
Taylor, Baron, 298.
Telegraph, the Daily, 246.
Terroil, Ponson du, 98, 143, 144.
Teste, 208, 209.
Thersites, 21.
Thibaudeau, Adolphe, 250.
Thiers, Adolphe, 8, 9, 11, 16, 22; *v.* Gambetta, 26-43; at Tours, 44, 61; 64, 70, 84, 92, 104, 111, 122, 130, 138, 140-143, 145, 149, 152, 168, 194, 209-213, 221-225, 250, 290, 294.
Thiers, Mme., 36, 42, 212.
Thourel, 84.
Tours, 44, 51, 58, 59, 75, 77, 80 Volunteers at, 97, 119, 121.
Trial, the Cubières and Teste, 169.
Trial, the Naundorff, 2.
Trianon, the Petit-, 93.
Trochu, General, 15, 16, 17, 67, 71, 72, 135.
Troubezkoï, Princess Lise, 225, 227.

VALLÈS, Jules, 5, 230.
Vandal, M. Albert, 229.
Vandamme, General, 229.
Van Dyck, 273.
Vanves, Fort of, 297.
Vapereau, 128.
Vaudemont, Louise de, 123.
Vere, Sir Francis, 252.
Véron, Dr., Louis, 90.
Veuillot, Louis, 277.

Viala, Joseph, 182.
Victor Emmanuel, 33.
Victor, Prince, 288.
Victoria, Queen, 42, 207.
Vienna, the Congress of, 283.
Vigny, Alfred de, 265, 266.
Villeboisnet, General Espivent de, 163.
Villemot, Auguste, 273, 274.
Villeneuve, Paillard de, 257.
Villersexel, 113.
Vimcreati, Count, 109.
Vinoy, M. Fébère, 232, 233.
Voltaire, 181, 227.

Waldersee, Count von, 104.
Walewski, Count, 10.
Wallace, Sir Richard, 289.
War, the Portfolio of, 57.
Waterloo, 106, 184.
Werder, General von, 111.
Werther, 239.
Wilhelmshafen, 47.
Wilson, Daniel, 44, 81, 122, 129, 137, 138.
Wimpffen, General de, 25, 83.
Woestyne, M. Ivan de, 234-236.

Zola, 288.

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